

PERSONALITY AND POWER
OR THE
SECRET OF REAL INFLUENCE
—
WALPOLE

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PERSONALITY AND POWER;

OR

THE SECRET OF REAL INFLUENCE.

BY

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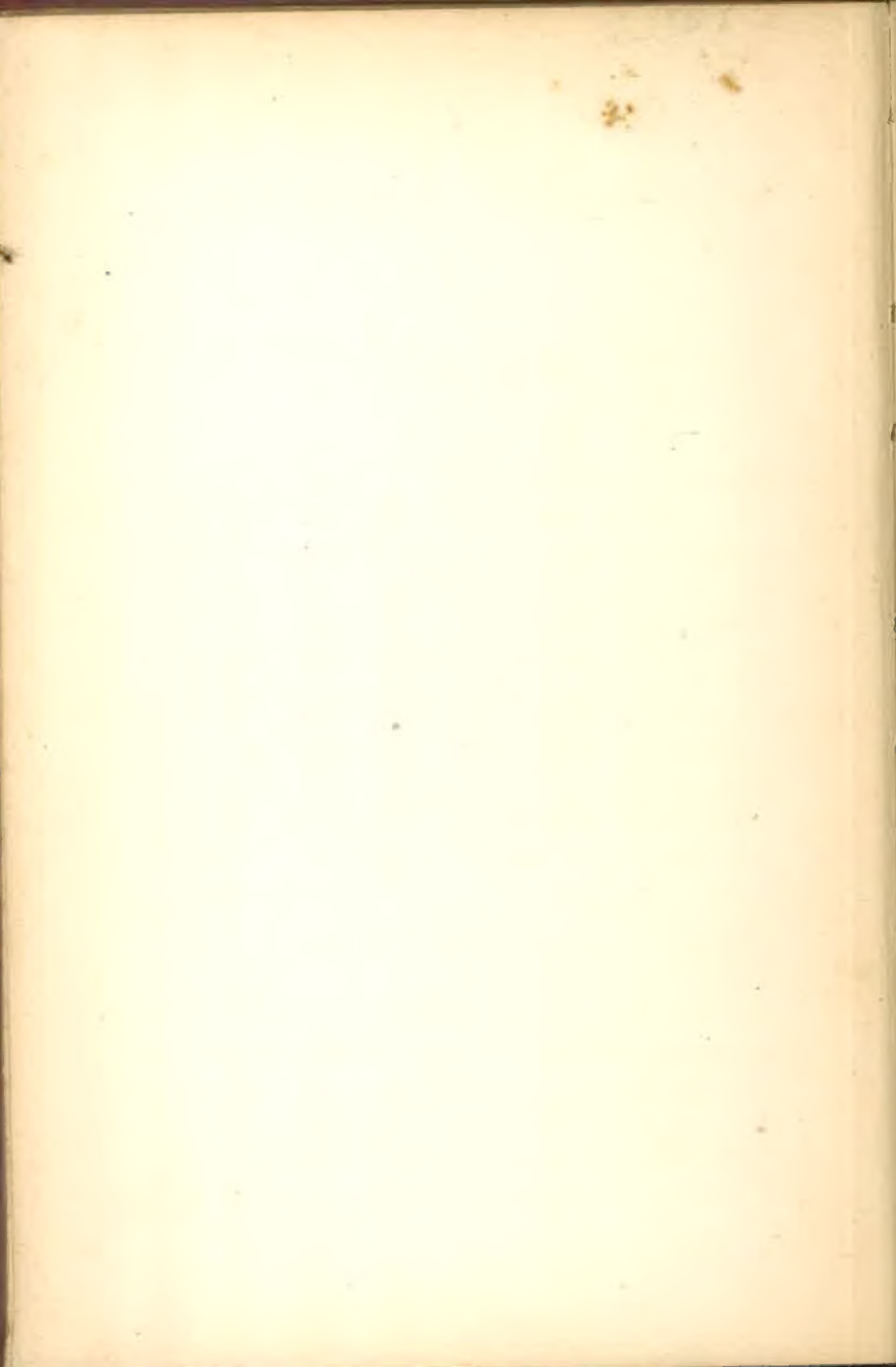
RECTOR OF LAMBETH,

Examining Chaplain to the Archbishop of York.

“AS THE MAN IS, SO IS HIS STRENGTH.”—*Judges viii. 21.*

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PREFACE.

THE subject of this book may be said to be a sequel to that of "Vital Religion." There the endeavour was made to show that real life consists in knowing Christ. It is a corollary to this that such knowledge means power, for life is power. And yet how often the confession is heard, "I am no use—I can't do anything." Such a confession implies that power lies in certain circumstances, advantages, the possession of gifts or talents; which those who complain are without. The aim of this book is to shew that power lies in personality; and that every personality—whether it be that of a slave or a king, that of a pupil or a master—so far as it is developed has influence. The words "personal magnetism" suggest that a kind of power goes forth from certain personalities who are attractive, and by the grace of their attractiveness draw others to them. It is the belief of the writer that every personality that is not deformed by sin is attractive, to those who have eyes to see it. With so many, the features or the manner, the outward circumstances or some acquired artificial characteristics, hide away the self, and it is never seen, and, consequently,

a false impression is made. But when seen—and now and again under certain favourable conditions it is seen—it immediately exercises a sort of fascination: we are arrested, long to know more, and are vexed that only in that passing moment was the true self revealed. If this be true, then the development or revelation of that self is the aim of life, for we have no right to rob the world of that which will help it forward. We know that no power that we *have* is so masterful as the power that we *are*. The object, then, of this volume may be expressed in the words with which Mr. Shorthouse explains the purpose of “John Inglesant,” namely, “to exalt the unpopular doctrine that the end of existence is not the good of one’s neighbour, but one’s own culture.” This is not selfish, as it would seem to be at first sight, for only by strict attention to oneself can we hope to be of use to others. In seeking to fulfil his aim the Author has rested his case on concrete illustrations rather than abstract reasoning. He had always felt the power of a book like “Self Help,” where every lesson is taught by example rather than precept, and he longed to adopt this method. It seemed that, if he could find characters highly gifted and having the advantage of position, opportunities, scholarship and the like, and could shew, by way of contrast, that others, without these helps and simply by the grace of their personality, exercised the larger influence, he would be adding an argument to the cause of self-culture which might be of value. He was guided to go to Scripture

for this help, because only there could he be certain of finding the real characteristics of men's lives revealed. The Bible cares but little for those interesting facts which make up a large part of biography, but rather lays stress on those inner struggles over which we naturally draw a veil. The effect, however, is that we know Jacob, Saul, David, S. Peter and S. Paul better than we know the men whose biographies fill our shelves. Only one exception is made in this principle of illustration, and that the case of Seneca, who offered such a marked contrast to S. Paul that he has been included. If there be any who are led to feel that though they may be without position, gifts, or talents, they are not necessarily without influence, the book will not have been written in vain. The promise, "ye shall receive power, when the Holy Ghost is come upon you," is of universal application, and it is our duty to see that we place no hindrances in its way.

It is only necessary to add that the book is the outcome of a number of addresses given during the last four years on various occasions, chiefly at Retreats and on Quiet Days. They have no pretence to literary character, but are very much in the form in which they were then given. It is impossible to express my indebtedness to all the writers whose books have helped in their preparation. Acknowledgment is made in some cases, though I fear not in all. I should, however, like to make special mention of Bishop Creighton's Letters, especially those re-published in "Counsel for

the Young"; Dr. Illingworth's beautiful book on "Christian Character"; and Canon Scott Holland's stimulating "Personal Studies," which gave an ideal, though an impossible one to follow, as to how such a book as this ought to have been written. Any value it may have is due to those clergy and others who heard many of the addresses, and by their kind interest in the subject have encouraged me to pursue it. To them I give my hearty thanks.

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INTRODUCTION.

RELIGION AND POWER.

IN the first chapter of his letter to the Romans, S. Paul replies to the feeling that his delay in going to Rome was due to foreboding about the reception of the Gospel in the great capital of the world. The Apostle seemed to be putting off his visit, so men said, from fear lest the Gospel should not meet with the same reception in Rome as elsewhere. It would appear from the strong words, "I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ," as though there was a suggestion that S. Paul was actually timid about preaching the Gospel in Rome, fearful lest it should be discredited.

This leads him to say they were greatly mistaken if they supposed he was ashamed of the Gospel of Christ. How could he be? The Gospel was Divine power, and no one is ashamed of power, least of all Divine power. Is a man ashamed of wealth or position? No;

because they both mean a certain kind of power. Is he ashamed of learning, or of artistic gifts? Do we find that the thinkers, poets, or sculptors are backward in displaying their talents? No; because they mean power. No one is ashamed of power, even human power.

How little likely, then, was S. Paul to be ashamed of the Gospel, which meant Divine power. And of that he was certain. He had had many years experience of it. He had known what it was in himself, and he had seen what it was in others. His own personal experience is given in one of his letters to the Church of Corinth. In it he speaks of the difficulties life had brought. There was his bodily infirmity, the prostration and weakness that he knew through what he calls the stake in the flesh. At first this had been so trying, such a hindrance to his work, that he had made it an earnest subject of prayer; but after a time he not only acquiesced in it, but took pleasure in it, for he learnt by actual experience that when he was most enfeebled, then he felt more clearly the Divine strength.*

Then, again, there were the necessities, the actual bodily wants, the lack of means for the necessary physical needs. He was in "fastings often"; but here, too, he found that his need was God's occasion. When all resources were at an end, then he knew Christ was nigh at hand.

* 2 Cor. xii. 7-10.

But not only infirmities and necessities, there were reproaches and persecutions. His sensitive, loving nature shrank from the dark looks and hard words of men, especially those who ought to have been his friends; but when he felt most lonely and most hated, he knew that that was just the opportunity Christ would take to comfort and strengthen him. His own experience, then, had led him to take a very different view of these things from that which the world took. To most men they would have been serious hindrances, distracting limitations, to be dreaded and, as far as possible, avoided; but to S. Paul they became blessings, because they were divine opportunities of power. "When I am weak, then am I strong." And that which he experienced in himself he found was shared by others. His converts told him the same thing. They, too, had been in desperate situations; but the more desperate, the greater the revelation of power.

The Apostle had, therefore, no more doubt that the Gospel was power than the man of wealth has that money is power, or the statesman that position is power. He proclaimed it, therefore, freely and boldly, and was as ready to do so in Rome as in Corinth or Ephesus. For there was no charmed circle in which alone it could be experienced. It was not confined to the educated or cultured; nor was it limited to the people of the Covenant. All might experience it—Jew and Gentile, bond and free—

provided they believed. That was the condition. For, unlike other elements of power, it needed to be appropriated before it could be experienced. S. Paul was evidently not referring to the signs and wonders which in those early days accompanied the preaching of the Gospel ; they were manifestations of power, but they might conceivably have been wrought by those who were not people of force of character. The power he was referring to was personal power, power that made every man or woman to whom it came more of a person.

It was this that was so surprising, that he found again and again the weak becoming strong ; the narrow, broad-minded ; the superficial, deep ; the talkative, silent ; the immoral, temperate ; the selfish, loving. Such changes were clear proofs of the reality of the power of the Gospel.

Now it is to be feared that this statement of the Apostle's would not receive the same unquestioning credence to-day as it did amongst the converts at Rome. If the Gospel is power, men ask, then where are the signs of it? The average Christian is not, on the whole, a more remarkable person than the average man of the world. Power is what we want, but we do not find it in the Church. And yet, we may well reply, if not there, where do we find it? Where does the moral force come from that maintains the schools, hospitals, homes and refuges? What would the dark parts of London

be like if the Christian force were stayed in them for a single year?

Stop missionary enterprise for five years, and what would be the state of the heathen in India, Africa, and China? The Gospel is still the power of God; and if the Christians do not appear to be in themselves more remarkable than those who belong to the world, it may be that the distinction between the world and God's kingdom is not so marked as it was in S. Paul's lifetime; or it may be that the signs of personal power are not so readily seen as might at first be thought. If in any heathen city we were to take broadly the Christians and contrast them with the heathen, a difference would at once be discernible, a difference that would attest S. Paul's words, "The Gospel is the power of God to everyone that believeth." But in Christian towns there is no clear division between the believers and the unbelievers. All have appropriated, more or less, the ethical teaching of Christ; all are supposed to be more or less interested in its application to the municipal life of the place; and the distinction between real and professed believers is necessarily hard to draw.

Then, again, it must be borne in mind that real personal power does not lie on the surface. The power of the world is expressed in its outward show, its cleverness, its audacity; but the power of the Gospel in patience, meekness, gentleness, and self-control. It is more evident

in difficulty than in ease, when things go badly than when things go well. It is not, therefore, very apparent to the onlooker. He may suppose that some inoffensive Christian, who says but little and is retiring in disposition, is a poor, weak person without any force of character; but if he follow into the home, he may find that she is the one to whom all look, whose advice is always sought and presence most sorely missed. There is a great deal of power, but not in evidence.

But though it may be said, plainly and without hesitation, that the Gospel of Christ brings real power to everyone who accepts it, and that there is abundance of proof to-day to show that it does, it may be worth while to see along what directions the power will be manifested. Though there is power in the Church of Christ—and men are very blind who, wilfully ignoring it, declare it cannot be seen—it is also true that there is nothing like so much power as there ought to be. Villages and towns are not lifted as they ought to be. The evils of immorality and drunkenness are not being mastered, nor public opinion infused with righteous zeal. There is a disposition to acquiesce in conditions which, though recognized as bad, are thought to be incapable of change, and the tendency, especially in large towns, to be dissipated with work and pleasure, leaves no room for the cultivation of those Christian virtues which mean power.

It may be well, then, to call fresh attention to the fact that the Gospel is power ; that it does make a man more of a force, more of a person ; that it is effective for the duties of this world, as well as full of hope for the fulfilment of the great offices of the life to come.

CHAPTER I.

PERSONALITY :

IMPORTANCE OF DEVELOPING IT.

SOME years ago a Lutheran pastor, who was addressing the young German princes at their confirmation, concluded an earnest charge by urging them to become personalities ; and the Emperor, at the luncheon that followed, emphasized this, as though they could render no greater service to the Empire than by following out the advice then given.

We are so accustomed to use the word personality in a large way that, whilst prepared to grant that those called to a high position might fulfil the pastor's ideal, we feel that it suggests for most of us thoughts which it would be conceited to indulge. Does not the word always carry with it an air of distinction ? Is there not a sense of mystery and power in it which reserves it to but a few ? Have we not read in a weekly journal that "it is the strongest force in the world : that the greatest and most moving ideas, the great revolutions, reformations and religious revivals come to the world through great personalities ?" Is it not, then,

vain and foolish, as well as wanting in modesty, to aim at becoming such? Is not the mysterious phrase, "personal magnetism," which all covet and so few possess, directly and definitely associated with personality.

So we say ; and yet, when we get rid of the sound of the word and think of its meaning, we find that to become a personality is simply "to be ourselves." There is nothing strange or out of the way in that. Each man has a self, and the development of that self, or personality, in his main business. It is that to which our Lord urges at the conclusion of that difficult explanation of the old law which He gives in His Sermon on the Mount: "Ye, therefore, shall be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect." For the word "perfect," as we see in the revised reading of Eph. iv. 13, means "full grown"—*i.e.*, fully developed. We are, then, to be careful of the contemptuous expression, the immodest thought, the irreverent, profane word, because such things check our growth, keep us stunted, or even throw us back. No one who realizes the greatness of the end for which he was born, the perfection of self-development which he is intended to attain, but will strain every moral fibre of his being lest he miss the goal. It is the same thought that He impressed on His disciples in another place, where He bids them win their souls. There He has been promising hard things—persecution, loss, even death—but, if they will

but remain steadfast and endure to the end, they will "win their souls"*—*i.e.*, become completely themselves, realize that perfect freedom which God has destined for them, the fullest opportunity, the largest liberty.

But, it may be asked, Why need we be urged to do that which we naturally do? Does not everyone endeavour to make the most of himself, to be as fine as he possibly can be; and is not this the ground of all the absurd conceits so universally ridiculed? the man by his voice, his manner and appearance; the woman by her dress, the arrangement of her hair, the carefully taught behaviour; the school-boy by his slang, all seek to impress themselves on the society in which they are. Each one seems to be learning all his life how he or she can be most forceful; and as this or that is found to be most successful in the art of acquiring some personality, it is greedily adopted and straightway becomes the fashion. It may be some exercise in the gymnasium requiring courage and skill, or some accomplishment requiring time and serious attention, or some ascetic habit demanding stern resolution: it quickly finds disciples, so imperious does everyone recognize the necessity of becoming something.

All this may be freely recognized as only confirming what has been implied—that there is a natural instinct for everyone, as there is

* *S. Luke* xxi. 19.

for every plant, every animal, to follow out its own plan of development and to become itself. As Mr. Illingworth points out: "Self-assertion, in the strict sense of the term, or self-appreciation, is a fundamental instinct of our personality. It is simply the desire to live, which, when thought out, implies the development of our various capacities with a corresponding enlargement of their opportunities for action; the emphasis, the expansion, the realization of all that we have it in us to become. We cannot help feeling that such self-appreciation is natural, normal, healthy; rooted and grounded in the truth of our being; a thing that we desire for ourselves, and admire when we see it in others, poets, painters, soldiers, statesmen, men who, as we say, have made their mark in the world."*

The mischief is, that the main endeavour with so many is to do it from without rather than from within. (The absurdity of spending hours in making the outward man attractive and beautiful, when the real self is decaying within, is patent to everyone.) It is not so generally seen that we may be guilty of the same absurdity in developing our gifts and paying small attention to the character that uses them. One department of knowledge after another is mastered—we are credited with being great scholars, or people of really remarkable information, we are artistic or musical—and yet no one believes we have any personal power. The

* *Christian Character*, p. 43

outworks are very fine and wonderful, but the personality that lies behind them is overthrown in an instant by a sudden assault. We may, therefore, pass away to another sphere almost as small as when we entered this. "Take away that which he hath," are words of very awful import to those who are spending their life in furnishing their house instead of strengthening the owner.

"Life," then, as Bishop Creighton writes in one of his letters, "is the development of our personality, and this personality is something more than the sum total of our observed qualities. One man, with many gifts which can be recognized, is somehow still unattractive and ineffective; another, less richly endowed, whose qualities cannot be separately appraised so highly, is much more influential, and obviously leads a richer life. Why? Because he is more of a person, is more consistent, has a central source of power. We may call this 'personality.' Now, the great question about oneself is the formation and nurture of this central point of our being, this personality." It is the great question, not simply because our future depends upon it, but because the future of so many others depends upon it. As one—of whom the editor of his *Memoirs* justly remarks, "The greatness of Frederick Temple's life is the life itself"—boldly declares: "To be, then, is infinitely higher than to do; to be thoroughly true is a higher service than to spread the truth;

to be pure in heart brings you nearer to God and does more for your fellow-men, bears a more excellent fruit, than a life spent in helping others to be pure ; to be a Christian makes more Christians than to teach the Gospel." Or as Miss Cobbe puts it : "The truest and surest way in which we can serve our fellow-men is not so much to do anything for them, but to be the very truest, purest, noblest beings we know how." Life, according to this estimate, the truth of which we all recognize, must consist in becoming rather than being, and in being rather than doing.

It is this care for self, this determination to use every opportunity to develop self, that enhances every gift we may have ; for their power and influence depends on that which lies behind them. The character must always be larger than the talent or gift used ; it has always been so with really great men. As Emerson, in his delightful essay on Character, notices : "Those who listened to Lord Chatham felt that there was something finer in the man than anything which he said. We cannot find the smallest part of the personal weight of Washington in the narrative of his exploits. The authority of the name of Schiller is too great for his books. This inequality of the reputation to the works or the anecdotes is not accounted for by saying that the reverberation is longer than the thunder-clap, but somewhat resided in these men, which begat an expecta-

tion that outran all their performances." They were bigger than their best deeds, and through their personality they made their deeds effective.

So, too, Mr. Inge, in a recent book of sermons, testifies: "It does not seem to me that clever books and brilliant sermons have done so much for me as those chance glimpses into characters far above my own. . . . We are a little surprised that one who, it may be, has talked little, and in no very striking or original manner, should have laid up such a store of gratitude merely by being what he was."

But what self is it that we are to develop, and on what lines? Men say there is no single self, but a double or treble self in all men. Some differentiate two selves as different from one another, as the characters of Jekyll and Hyde; others take in the spiritual world, and find three selves—the self we know, the self God knows, and the self the world knows. "There is the self we are to control, which is the Me; the self we are to try to know, which is the I; the self that we are to reverence, which is the ideal self, the perfect man, the Christ in us."

Such subtle analysis, interesting and helpful though it may be in its proper place, is, however, beyond our present purpose. For most people it is sufficient to recognize that there is but one self—the self that will be judged before the Throne of God. And if we ask on what

lines, there is a host of answers. Every book of education is full of principles or systems for the development of self. Some recommend this course, others that; and we are bewildered by the number of suggestions. It is better to turn from theory to practice; to look at history, and specially biography, and see on what lines souls have found their true freedom.

We take up, for example, the life of Henry Martyn. We take note of the early beginnings—the unassuming father, the miner's cottage, the small house at Truro, the idle, hot-tempered boy with brains. How unpromising it is. And the next chapter is not much better. We see the lad passing to the university; we hear of company none of the best, of fresh idleness, disagreeable behaviour at home to mother and sister, of a sudden, startling success that would turn most people's heads; and we ask what is to come of it all. Then there is fierce conflict, long and wearisome, followed by the great renunciation. A new man emerges, with new hopes and new desires. Virtue goes out of him amongst the soldiers on shipboard and the natives in India. Its power increases amidst sharp suffering and daily trials. At last there is quiet calm; a great man has passed away. But how was he developed? It is this that interests us. Guesses are made; some put it down to this, others to that. We long to know, but are not quite sure.

So it is of every biography. "It is true,"

writes Mr. Morley, "that what interests the world in Mr. Gladstone is even more what he was than what he did; his brilliancy, charm and power, the endless surprises; his dualism, or more than dualism; but," he adds, "who is to find that? I am not sure that the incessant search for clues through this labyrinth would not end in analysis and disquisition that might be no great improvement even upon political history." That is true; there is no biographer sufficiently free from bias or prejudice, or endowed with insight clear enough to find the clue to a man's life.

The task, then, in which we are engaged might seem hopeless were it not for the religious biographies which the Bible gives us. Here, indeed, we find what we need. We are not left doubting as to the events which were critical, nor as to the true inner history of the men and women portrayed. These things are pointed out for us. We see how Jacob becomes Israel and Simon becomes Peter, how the Son of Thunder becomes the Son of Grace and Saul becomes Paul. We see how men who were nothing in themselves became so great as to leave a definite mark behind them, to impress their contemporaries and posterity. We see, if we look closely enough. And the secret is the same, though the stories are so different. They simply got free of their limitations and became themselves, each step being accompanied, as it always is, by a fresh indwelling

of the power of God; and so they became great.

None of those whose lives we are to study were born great. Two were sons of farmers, two of Levites, two of fishermen, and one of a narrow-minded Pharisee. Probably of none, except it may be Moses and Samuel, would any have predicted greatness. They were humble, simple men, standing in contrast to others of their contemporaries who, with advantages they could not lay claim to, not only never surpassed them, but could not approach them in power and influence. For example, Esau had certain manifest advantages over Jacob, as Eli over Samuel; so, too, Balaam over Moses and Seneca over S. Paul. They had certain observed qualities, obvious gifts and endowments, and they ought to have been effective; but they passed away, as thousands do, without leaving a mark behind except one of warning. By setting them side by side with those who had nothing, and observing closely what Scripture says of their respective careers, much may be found which will be helpful in the study of personality.

It will, then, be seen that whilst men of God, as we may call them, were inferior to others in gifts, opportunities, and acquirements, they effected infinitely more, moved others more directly and definitely, simply because they expanded naturally, were more fully themselves, and by faith kept their natures open

and susceptible to the impressions of the powers of the world to come.

Something having been said as to the necessity and the power of self-development, one word may be added as to its joy and peace. Our own phraseology bears witness to it. "He was not himself," we say of a man who is weak in body, or has failed when we expected that he would succeed. "He came to himself" is the phrase used by our Lord of that first step in the right direction which the poor Prodigal took. "He excelled himself" is what men say of one who has done more than anyone expected of him, or "he was just his old self" of one who is as pleasant and natural as he well could be. We all wish to be ourselves, because we feel there is a freedom which leads to natural expression, a reality which causes no shame. Such an attitude means that we are at peace with Heaven and mankind; all that we are is open to the eye of God and mankind; there is nothing to discover, nothing to conceal. If men do not like us, at any rate they will not complain that we are deceiving them. We may be amongst the nettles, or the violets, or the roses, but in any case we are God's planting, fulfilling His purpose, and are therefore happy in our condition. We are rid of that painful self-consciousness which is always born of self-distrust, because we have learnt that the only contribution we can make to the world's good is by being what we are. Disguise effects

nothing, whereas simplicity plays a definite part in the unfolding of God's purposes. "The object of all life is to live," not to act; and it is only in proportion as we are simple and free that we live at all.

Nothing is here said as to the region of personality, where its secrets may most surely be found, but enough has been noted to make us feel that the Lutheran pastor was urging the very highest when he asked young German princes to become personalities. "For as the man is, so shall his strength be." Not as his mind, his affections, or his gifts, but as the whole man is, so will his power be. In other words, according to his personality, so shall be his influence.

CHAPTER II.

ITS SECRET.

HAVING considered that the aim of life is the development of personality, we now seek to know what is the principle of growth. For it is to be remembered that our aim is not a certain stature and then an arrest, but a continual growth, a perpetual becoming, till we reach "the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."

It was a singular impatience in Professor Huxley that led him to consent to a sacrifice of the whole future if he could but be made completely right at once. "I protest," he is believed to have said, "that if some great power would agree to make me always think what is true, on condition of being turned into a sort of clock and wound up every morning, I should instantly close with the offer." Very different was Lessing's hope: "Did the Almighty, having in His right hand truth and in the left search after truth, deign to proffer me the one I might prefer, in all humility, but without hesitation, I should request search after truth."

The prize is not in what we attain, but in

the process. It is the aim, the pursuit, that brings about the growth. Directly our self stays in its growth, then death has set in somewhere; and, unless it be checked, we shall slowly, but surely, dwindle away. Even were it possible to have Huxley's ideal, and to remain in a perfect though stationary condition for all time, the romance of life would have departed. Neither faith nor hope would any longer exist. We might tell the time accurately, always have a truthful face; but men would tire of us if we had no word or promise of the future. Growth may be attended by loss or disfigurement; but more beautiful a thousand times the flower, with its colours and perfumes, even if it be imperfect, than the immaculate stem that will be eternally sterile. Manhood may only be reached by some through a succession of losses—it may be hearing, it may be sight, it may be a limb; but will anyone prefer a spotless innocence, as imaged in Sir Joshua Reynolds' great picture, to the disciplined, chastened, middle-aged life of the man or woman who has struggled forward? "A man's reach should exceed his grasp, else what's Heaven for?" is a significant question.

Granted this, we now ask what is the principle of the growth of personality; is it different from that of the growth of other things? That, we know, is dependence. Nothing isolated can grow. The plant cannot grow apart from the sun, the atmosphere, and the earth; the

child cannot grow apart from the food which nature supplies. In nature there is no independent or self-centred existence. But is this true of man? Is it true that for him, as for nature, "life is a sum of relationships?" If we ask the question, it is only for the purpose of unfolding the answer. There can be no sort of doubt whatever. We at once contrast the boy who lives apart from others with the lad who has a good home and a good school; or we think of the great, whose lives have been recorded, and remember that there is not one who does not confess his obligation to a mother, a teacher, or a friend. Washington, Wellington, and Napoleon owed the greatness of their character chiefly to their mothers. Others to their teachers; *e.g.*, Archbishop Benson said of Prince Lee, "I owe to him all that I was, or am, or ever shall be." Yet others to their friends; so of Hallam and Tennyson it was said, "All their thoughts, dreams, and aspirations for the present and the future were shared together."

Nothing, indeed, is more sure than that personality, though developed from within, is dependent on outside forces. As Drummond truly writes: "Not more certain is it that it is something outside the thermometer that produces the change in the thermometer than it is something outside the soul of man that produces a moral change upon him. . . . As the branch ascends, and the bud bursts, and the fruit

reddens under the co-operation of influences from the outside air, so man rises to the higher stature under invisible pressures from without. According to the first law of motion: Every body continues in its state of rest or of uniform motion in a straight line, except in so far as it may be compelled by impressed forces to change that state. Every man's character remains as it is, or continues in the direction in which it is going, until it is compelled by impressed forces to change that state."*

And the impressed force that develops personality is, as we have seen, not a substance, not even a truth, it is a person. It is true that our Lord tells us that the truth will make us free, but, as He speaks in another place, He is the Truth. Persons influence persons; men and women make men and women; and only so far as what we see or hear is personal, only so far does it permanently affect us. And the stronger the personality, the greater the effect. We speak of certain people having the power of drawing us out: by that we mean that when we are with them we feel we grow insensibly bigger—we have more hope about ourselves, more confidence that we are not useless. And if that be the effect of a single personality, there is still greater effect where two people are acting as one. The commendation of two or three friends, the confidence expressed by the family is wonderfully inspiring.

* *The Changed Life*, p. 192.

When the two or three become a hundred or a thousand, the effect is still more striking. A meeting of determined people has often drawn out of others an abundance of resource, an audacity of venture, of which no one felt them capable. The personality of a large gathering may have tremendous force.

All this being so, who can calculate the force of the personality of Christ? For here we have not only a unique personality, the most personal personality the world has seen, but One in Whom all were made. We have One Who is not merely a member of the race, but the Race; Who has not simply the characteristic of a human being, but the characteristics of every human being. Nay, more than this: in Christ we have the whole Power of the Godhead acting through His Humanity. Were it not for His respect for our free will, one look could make us His slaves for ever.

What, then, ought to be the effect of Christ's personality working upon ours? What effect, we ask, had it upon the men He knew and was most familiar with? At first the effect was disappointing. They loved Him, made great sacrifices for Him, delighted in His presence, but they were not permanently empowered by Him. He had not made them His own by His Spirit. He was with them, but not in them. It could not be said He possessed them. But after His death a great change took place. They were the same men, but Christ seemed to speak through

them and live in them. They did not, however, become, as we might have expected, echoes or mere imitations of Him. They were more themselves than ever before, their personality more marked and clearly defined ; but with it there was the sense of Someone filling it out, drawing it out, developing it.

One of the most remarkable of them, whose personality was certainly very strong and definite, felt the stirring of this Indwelling Presence to so great a degree that his own individuality, which was so apparent to others, was lost to himself, and he summed up his experiences in those well-known words, "Not I, but Christ liveth in me." This was possible because there was a certain sympathetic likeness between the Apostle and Christ that had subsisted before he was born. In Christ he had been made. It was also possible because, in the glorification of Christ, the Spirit Who came from Christ, and had been so abundantly upon Him during His ministry, now came on men, applying the personality of Christ in ways before unknown. To be full of the Spirit was to be full of Christ, and to be full of Christ was to be that true ideal self that had existed in Christ before it had a place in the world.

These are, however, mysterious movements of which we can only hint. It were more to the point to seek how Christ dwells in us and we in Christ, what He means when He tells us that apart from Him we can do nothing.

Much will be said, in the pages that follow, about the characteristic virtues that invite Christ's indwelling. It may be well to speak quite generally here of what we may call (1) the Intellectual Indwelling and (2) the Mystical Indwelling.

But before doing so, we must remember that all, whether mystical or intellectual, is by the Holy Ghost. He it is Who takes the things of Christ and shews them unto us, He it is Who enables us to receive Christ, He it is Who so prepares mind and spirit that Christ can dwell in us. Bearing this in mind, we distinguish the intellectual indwelling as that of which we are conscious. It is analogous to the indwelling of our favourite poet or teacher. Shakespeare abides in the man who not only reads him but studies him, commits him to memory, and imperceptibly adopts his attitude towards human life. Watts abides in the man who not only admires his pictures, but sees their meaning, who is so familiar with his thought as to be able to interpret those subtle harmonies of form and colouring which to the ordinary onlooker are so perplexing. Beethoven abides in the man who not only enjoys the various movements of sound, but reads in them the thoughts of the great master. Such disciples become the expressions of their master, live in his presence, and constantly refresh themselves with his thoughts. Some are so devoted as to confess without shame that they know very

little else, that the spirit of the dead completely masters them. They inherit their likes and dislikes, even their political and their religious views.

This effect is still more remarkable if the one abiding in us is living, and not dead. We are then able to hear not only express and definite statements, but those indirect, chance remarks on men and things which have so strong an effect. We are possessed not only by their thought and the expressions which declare it, but by their personality. It is not so much what they said, but what they are. Our characters are shaped by them, we imitate their virtues, take on the main impress of their life. And if they be men of character rather than talent, if the moral side of their life be more strongly developed than the intellectual, then, constantly dwelling upon their virtues, we become virtuous; continually meditating on the purity of their life, we become pure. As, in Drummond's words, "To live with Socrates must have made one wise; with Aristotle, just; Francis of Assisi, must have made one gentle; Savonarola, strong"; so to live with some saintly Christian teacher would make one holy. But from that high privilege most people seem debarred, till they remember that the King of Saints, "Who was dead, but is alive for evermore," invites them to share His fellowship, nay, Himself comes to make His abode with them. What, then, ought to be the effect of His influence?

One word of His, said the German Emperor to the princes, on the occasion referred to above, is worth more than all that philosophers, poets, or historians have tried to teach. But if that be its value, His teaching must be at least as much a part of us as our poets' or masters' is. We must believe in it, be enthusiastic about it, refuse to allow any divergence from it. It is sufficient to know that He said it. We do not question it. Such intellectual fellowship means that we will only think within His thoughts, and only express ourselves, so far as we are able, within His life; it will mean a breadth of view which will not allow us to wound anyone else by narrow partizanship; it will mean a depth that will refuse to content itself with mere superficial statements; it will mean silence that will be tiresome to friends, zeal that to our enemies appears fanaticism.

Yet, whilst we admit that this ought to be our attitude, we yet show only too plainly, by our negligence of His teaching, how small a hold it has over our lives. The whole body of His direct teaching is contained in a very small book; and yet who would like to be examined as to their knowledge of the *ipsisima verba*, the context or the occasion? Some sayings stand out quite plainly in our memory, and we recognize their power; but if the whole length and breadth of our Lord's teaching possessed our minds, how quickly people would recognize His presence in us.

They would say of us, what they say of some poet's disciple who has suddenly shown warmth of temper when his master's words or principles were called in question, "He lives in his master, and never seems to think of anything else but what he has said or written. Any suspicion about his master's honour or character stirs the flame of devotion into a blaze." It would not be a question of what was becoming or unbecoming, reverent or irreverent, the spirit of a disciple would be aroused, and all would know it.

Such an indwelling is that which we obtain through studying, marking and learning His words. It is the first and the obvious method. But there is something further than this. It is not likely that S. Paul and S. John referred to a good memory of the Lord's words, when they spoke of being in Christ and Christ in them. The analogy to those mystical phrases must be sought for in those mysterious invasions of man's personality with which mesmerism and hypnotism acquaint us. There the patient is possessed by another, and for a time under his obedience. There is one wide difference, however. In mesmerism, the will of the subject is gone; there is no choice; he must obey. But in the mystical communion with Christ, the will of the subject is always free, the choice is always respected. The soul holds out its hands to the Christ Who comes, and conducts Him into the very deepest re-

cesses. That much of this is unconscious, as at the time of Holy Communion, does not cast doubt on the reality of the fact; for we are continually being reminded that the causes which operate upon and shape our characters lie very deep, and forbid analysis. The motives of many actions which are not unimportant are beyond us. We often find ourselves saying, "I don't know why I acted like that." We are, as we say, surprised into forgiving words or generous actions of which we know quite well our nature is not capable. At such times we speak by the Spirit, we act in the Spirit.

But such manifestations of that mysterious indwelling are unhappily neither so frequent nor so striking as those that first witnessed to the power of the Spirit of Christ. In the Apostolic age, the dark, sub-conscious region of personality was illuminated and quickened in a marvellous way. It needed not the help of eye, ear, or brain, but was at once in communication with those it sought to influence. Usually, we are only in touch with personality when we understand its manifestation, know its language and expression. But on the Day of Pentecost these aids were unnecessary; the personality of the Apostle at once not only grasped the need of his brother from Pontus or Asia Minor whose language he did not know, but satisfied it through the sounds he uttered. Though it does not appear that this singular dispensing with the ordinary means of communi-

cation and fellowship was ever repeated, yet we do learn from the fourteenth chapter of the epistle to the Corinthians, as well as from other passages, that the Spirit of the Indwelling Christ excited thoughts too deep for words, which were often expressed in strange sounds that at times no one could interpret. In all such ways the Church of the first days realized the fact of the mystical indwelling of Christ by the Spirit with a distinctness and definiteness which we find it hard to realize.

Some Christians, indeed, never seem to get further in their knowledge of this mystery than that point to which the senses or the brain take them. Through music, through beauty, through a stimulating sermon, they realize from time to time that Christ is in them and that they are in Him; but let all the outlets be stopped, let the soul be gathered into its own hiding place, where neither sound nor outer thought can reach, and they feel an interior solitude which depresses and alarms. And yet it is just then, if they only knew it and were patient to wait for it, that the more important manifestations of His presence were most likely to be made.

Enough, however, has now been said to show where we are to find the secret of that inner growth and becoming, which is the aim and purpose of life.

CHAPTER III.

THE DREAD ALTERNATIVE.

BEFORE proceeding further with the main subject, it may be well to ask once and for all the question that must have occurred before. Suppose I fail to develop my own personality : in Scripture language, to win my soul? What then? What is the alternative? Is there any hint as to the future of arrested development, or a shrunken and withered soul? There is no more awful consideration, none that requires more caution and reserve. If the words that follow seem too plain, it must be remembered that they are only a commentary on what is written, and have no authority beyond that which they themselves bear.

It is our Lord Who raises the issue in that tremendous question He asked of Simon Peter. The Apostle had just indignantly pushed aside the Master's statement that He, the Son of God, must suffer and die. That was impossible. Our Lord sternly rebukes him, and then asks, "What does it profit, if a man gain the whole world and lose his own soul; or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" It was a

double question. In the first part, Christ puts in the one scale the highest object of human ambition, that which animated Napoleon and inspired Alexander—the whole world; and in the other, man's self, his soul, his personality. In the second, He appeals to the disciple to name anything which can be put on a par with the soul, which could be offered as a reasonable exchange for it. The force of the question has sometimes been lost by the supposition that our Lord, in using the word "world," is simply referring to the vanity and frivolity which is attractive to the foolish and gay. I do not think we have any right to give that restricted meaning to the word "world."

The world here, as always in the New Testament, means the outward visible phenomena, nature in its outward setting, men and women in their external aspect; all that which passeth away, and yet has, whilst it lasts, a true and beautiful significance if regarded as the expression of the Spirit. In this world our Lord lived and moved. Unlike John the Baptist, He came eating and drinking, freely mingling in its shows and social entertainments—in it, and yet not of it; using, but not abusing it. He had made it and, as an expression of His Father's love, He loved it. But He saw how men might make a terrible mistake, become enamoured of the thing rather than of the Person Who was using it for His self-revelation. He saw how men coveted it in its outward aspect. He noticed how some

sought to add field to field, hill to hill, and valley to valley. He saw how others longed to get an ever larger and larger acquaintance, to know widely and to be known. And He knew there were many in Rome and elsewhere who were striving to win the world of art, decorating their walls with beautiful forms and adorning their gardens with exquisite statuary. Everywhere there was this devotion to the outward, in one shape or another; and there were few who were not content to risk the loss of the inner side of it, that which alone gave it beauty or distinction, if they could but have the outward and visible sign.

Even His disciples were not altogether free from this spirit. They, too, longed for notice and distinction, sought the chief places and quarrelled amongst themselves as to who should be first. Indeed, it is significant that this question of the vanity of the world was addressed, not to Herod or a party of worldly-minded Sadducees, but to a simple-hearted fisherman who had forsaken all to follow Christ. To him the gaiety and frivolity of a great city made no appeal—he would be unable to discern wherein its attraction lay—and yet he had a world that he longed to win. He and his friends were always enquiring amongst themselves when the kingdom should be restored to Israel. They were not without ambition, not without desires for the world of power and influence, the kingdom that would

overcome the power of Herod and Pontius Pilate.

Our Lord, therefore, asks S. Peter what profit he would have if he won the whole world of his ambition; and to all who have the same hopes He still repeats the same question. What profit will you obtain if you have what you seek? And our reply at first is, "All profit"! Shall we not then get our hearts' desire, the realization of our ambition? What more can we want? We **forget** that it is only part of the question, or **perhaps** we think the addition, "if he lose his own soul," of no great importance. The thought of gaining, not only our little world that we have made it our object to pursue ever since we were children, but other people's worlds as well—the whole world, in short—dazzles us, and we are ready to risk the situation of possession without the soul. "Let me but get that," we say, 'and then see whether I shall not enjoy it. Talk as you please about the psychological side of the matter, about the necessity of the soul growing with the increase of our goods; we are not concerned with philosophy, we look to the material aspect, the actual possession of the coveted house and garden, the definite position in the social world, the treasures of art, literature, or music.

And so to-day, as well as in that yesterday when Christ lived, there are those who are occupied from morning till night, for the greater part of their lives, in this one great pursuit of

wealth, society, or art. Yet it is not hard to prove, indeed nothing simpler, that all that is won is worthless without the soul, *i.e.*, the personality.

Imagine the man with ten thousand acres in the most beautiful part of England or Scotland who has no soul for nature, to whom sunsets and sunrises appeal in vain; who finds no particular joy in the spring, perceives no glory in the golden colouring of the autumn; to whom all flowers are alike, all brooks and springs silent. You may well ask of what profit is all this without the soul to appreciate it. Or the woman of the world who seeks to captivate and lead Society, and acquires by wealth and the lavish bestowal of gifts some success. Her rooms are crowded, her circle widely attended, and by some of the illustrious. She moves in and out amongst them as one apart from them; she has an uneasy misgiving that her guests seek her gifts rather than herself, that they find more amusement and refreshment amongst one another than in her company. She has the world she seeks, but is painfully aware that she has no soul for it, no power to make it her own.

So, again, of what possible advantage is the priceless gallery of pictures in the fine castle to the owner who has no soul for art, or the fine band that renders the most beautiful music to the man who has no soul for music?

So, again, the world of fame. How many a man has felt just what Henry Martyn did

when he obtained the high position of Senior Wrangler—he had grasped a shadow.

The real possession of anything means what possession in the Bible means—occupation of the inner as well as the outer. The evil spirit who possesses does not inhabit a mere empty trunk or carcase, he inhabits the whole spiritual and intellectual realm of the man who is his victim. He becomes *him*, diverts his consciousness, uses his will, fills his imagination. The personality of the demon obsesses, rules, captivates the whole man.

It is not otherwise with our world. We only have it so far as we enter into it. It may be like one of the country homes of a great nobleman which he never uses, owns by legal title but not by possession or use. Of what profit, then, is it if we cannot enjoy it? Of what use is the world of music to the deaf, of beauty to the blind? Men suppose that acquisition means possession. But no one possesses his world till he understands it; and the comprehension of it means that his soul has mastered it, that it is a part of himself.

It is one of the enigmas of life that the greatest possible activity may be unattended by any self development, that the hands and the brain may be ceaselessly busy whilst the soul is standing still. It is this that makes the old age of some men and women so appalling. At last the physical powers weaken; the activity begins to slacken; the office is visited but once a week;

the social functions become more and more wearisome. Everything depends now on the soul, the real personality that lies behind the machine that is worn out, and it has almost withered away. The man apart from his machine is almost a nonentity. There is very little hope for the recovery of his personality, and there is some danger that he may lose it altogether. Physicians are called in to diagnose and administer drugs; change of air or scene is recommended. "He must get out of himself" is what the wise man recommends; but the recommendation comes a little late. Not all the forces of the universe can now drag him out of himself. You can no more drag men out of themselves than you can drag the plant out of the seed or the chicken out of the egg. The force within must co-operate with the force without, and then life breaks the shell, forces its way up through the stony ground; but if the inward vitality is lost, if the personality from neglect has become shrunken and paralysed, the friendly powers without exert themselves in vain.

So there are cases, and it is to be feared they are not on the decrease, in which men become shadows of themselves. They recognize that they are slipping out of things, that their touch is slackening. They curse the fate which seems to blight interest after interest. They make strong efforts now and again to recover themselves, to wake the old enthusiasms, but it is

in vain. They begin to suspect that they have made a great blunder, unless indeed the world is a sham. At last the position becomes maddening. And now and again they give one sharp, short testimony and pass away to another sphere, in the hope that if there is another world, and they live again, the enfeebled and palsied self may be set up again.

"The world is too heavy a task for a half dead soul" was the last message left by a young man occupying a high position before he took his life into his hands. "Too heavy a task," for he had ceased to be, or was only just in being. With his personality developed, the mastery of the world would have been a joy. But as it was, it was beyond his powers. Does, then, the loss of the soul, which the Scripture speaks of as a possibility, mean the loss of personality, that is, of self-realization? Does it imply the fulfilment of a haunting fear that a time may come when we are not ourselves and yet hardly know what we are? If so, can anything be worse?

"The loss of personality, that is hell," said an able man who had been long afflicted with mental disease. It may be that those who have for a time lost their true selves, and imagine themselves to be some other suffering person—Charles I., Mary Queen of Scots, Lady Jane Grey—feel something of the gloom of that kingdom of outer darkness where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth. It may be

that as here there are wise physicians and patient nurses striving by unceasing care to win back the souls of their patients, so there the redeemed may find their chief joy in ministering to the lost. Though Lazarus could not pass the gulf, Abraham's voice and counsel could be heard. Whether this hazardous suggestion be true or not, this darkest aspect of life may be, as all other aspects of life probably are, a parable of something darker. Every mental aberration is a tragedy we hide away from ourselves and talk of but little—a tragedy like other forms of suffering, which many have to bear through no fault of their own—but nevertheless having its own lesson; that there is nothing more to be dreaded, nothing more to be affrighted of than the loss of our own souls.

Not that such a loss is possible without frequent protest, without constant striving from within. An accident may rob you of your arm in an instant, a heavy blow may kill your memory, but the soul can only die by degrees. It is only by inanition that it gradually flickers out. You cannot kill it by a blow.

In Stephen Phillips' poem, the poor woman does not lose her priceless possession in a day.

She with a soul was born : she felt it leap
Within her : it could wonder, laugh and weep.
But dismally as rain on ocean bleat
The days upon that human spirit dear
Fell ; and existence lean, in sky dead grey,
Withholding steadily starved it away.
She felt it ailing for she knew not what ;

Feebly she wept, but she could aid it not.
Ah, not the stirring child within the womb
Hath such an urgent need of light and room.
Then hungry grew her soul ; she looked around,
But nothing to allay that famine found ;
She felt it die a little every day,
Flutter less wildly and more feebly pray.
Still it grew ; at times she felt it pull,
Imploring thinly something beautiful,
And in the night was painfully awake,
And struggled in the darkness till day-break.
For not at once, not without any strife
It died ; at times it started back to life.

Slowly she was aware her soul had died
Within her body : for no more it cried,
Vexed her no more ; she was exempt from strife,
And from her soul was willing to be freed.

Only little by little we lose that interest in things and people with which we come into the world, that interest which makes us "wonder, laugh, and weep," which bears witness to a self that is alive. And only by a steady refusal to feed and nourish it does the vitality become lower and lower, the capacity smaller and smaller, the personality weaker and thinner ; and if, as the poet thinks, the end comes with a willingness to lose our identity and become a soulless machine, the tragedy is not really less tragic, the horror not less dark. Life's opportunity has been thrown away ; and, whether the end is bewilderment or stony acquiescence, it is alike terrible. It arose in light, trailing clouds of glory on its path, but it sets in thick darkness, a darkness eternally felt. It is a drear and

horrible picture, but happily only true, if it be true, of those who wilfully sell their birthright. For all, those outside as well as those within the kingdom of grace, there is light and room; and the Gospel supplies more than one illustration of the many who shall come from the east and the west panting for that fulness of personality which the life to come alone can give.

For the rest there may be, as we have said, a remedy in that other life which may affect soul paralysis. We know, however, and it would be pain not to know it, that the Father's love does not shine more strongly in that other room than it does in this; that we are here in the hands of the good Physician as there; that He did all that could be done here as He will do all that can be done there. We are sure that, whatever schools there may be for self-development there, they are no better than the schools we know of here; that if life does not present the only opportunity of winning ourselves, it presents, under human circumstances, the very best one. And for those who recognize this, who see that the Father's aim and purpose with us is simply our perfection—*i.e.*, the fulness and completeness of being—there is no cause for alarm. Their will and that of the Father is one. They seek their freedom, the power to be fully and really themselves; and having absolute confidence in His wisdom and divine ordering, they thank Him for the circumstances,

the discipline, the gifts and opportunities which just fit their capacities. They recognize that they are hedged about by a mystery which enfolds their beginning when they enter life as their end when they leave it, but they are conscious that in each guided step they become more and more themselves, and rejoice in so being. The fate of others who have taken their own line, and set out to conquer worlds which they cannot use or know, is a matter of unceasing prayer, but not of determination. The Bible is a very grave and serious book, as well as a very hopeful one. The darker as well as the lighter passages are for personal use. There are the last who become first and the first last. There are the many called, but the few chosen. There is eternal life and eternal punishment. There is inner light and outer darkness, the joy of the Lord and the weeping and gnashing of teeth. Of the solution of all the problems such words suggest, but little is known. This, however, is certain, that One Who could give His Son to be born and to die will not fail in any measure of love.

CHAPTER IV.

PERSONALITY AND HEREDITY.

JACOB AND ESAU.

THE first thought in connection with the development of our personality is that of escape or deliverance. Think of it as we may, in the far past or in the near present we find it in a setting not its own. Whether the old theory called Traducianism be true, which teaches that in the thought of us and in our make was included all that we owe to ancestry and to heredity, or that of Creatianism, in which it is supposed that we come straight from the hand of God and are placed white and clean in surroundings darkened by sin, no one can tell. But we do know and feel that there is a reality about "the body of this death," the influence of which is constantly against our doing what we ought and in favour of our doing what we do not wish to do. It is of small practical concern how the matter is put, or what cause may be assigned to it: we know, by our own experience and that of others, that from the outset there is a down-

ward tendency which at times means bondage ; something in the blood, as people say, which dominates and overmasters. Like S. Paul, we recognize it as something apart from ourselves. Twice over he repeats, in the wonderful self-analysis he gives to his Christian brethren at Rome, "It is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me." There is, then, "a something not ourselves which makes for destiny;" and against this the personality makes a perpetual struggle, sometimes successfully, sometimes with failure.

Those glorious words, salvation, deliverance, which make up the Gospel, refer not, then, so much to some future circumstances which will be more easy or superior to our present ones, but to the extrication of self from this entanglement of the past. Of course, it is often asked why we should be subjected to so great a difficulty ; why should we not be set down ourselves, and nothing but ourselves, fresh from the hand of God. But this isolation and independence, such as we suppose is the condition of angelic life, would mean a sacrifice of human society as we know it. It would mean that all that wonderful life of combination and dependence—that which makes the Home, the City, the Church, the Nation, the Empire—would be lost, or realized under conditions so new and strange as to be scarcely the same thing. An individuality that owed nothing to anyone but its Maker, that was self-sufficing from the start,

and able to carve out its own destiny, would have certain advantages, but the losses would counterbalance them. We can imagine such an one selecting its family, making choice as to whether it would be English or French, as to whether it would belong to the country or the city, bereft of all those delightful associations which, even if they bring evil in their train, bring also untold good.

We are not, then, to arraign the Judge of all the earth because in His wisdom He ordered that law which, in spite of our spoiling by sin, has brought us so much good. It is more useful to try and discover whether the personality, set as it is in the midst of associations not its own, may not free itself of the bad without parting with the good.

It was, perhaps, natural at times, when society seemed very evil and degrading, that men should have felt that in isolation they would best develop that self which they recognized as the image of God. Nature was felt to be the all-sufficient educator, and men went out into the woods and deserts to prepare themselves for the life that would be ushered in by death. But no success attended these efforts. The life was a witness against the evils of society, but it accomplished little for the world and little for the individual. Had it been the Divine will that the self should be separated from the numberless associations incidental to birth, had it been God's purpose that man

should gain a unique singularity with no necessary relationship to any but his Maker, this plan might have been successful. But one of the laws of his development is love; and love of neighbour, not merely of nature—love of the man who toils beside him and of the millionaire whose castle overlooks him, not merely of man in the abstract.

Hence relationship is a necessity, not merely a possible help. As Bishop Creighton in one of his letters forcibly says:—"Life is a sum of relationships. There is no independent or self-centred existence. I am what I am in relation to others, and I know myself by seeing myself reflected in my influence on others—my power of touching their lives, and weaving their life and mine into some connected and satisfactory scheme which contains them all and points to some developments." And again: "What makes me in this world? My relations to others. What cheers me? The belief that some at least love me. What gives me any value in my eyes? The sense of my influence over and usefulness to one or two of those who love me. Without love and confidence on both sides, all this world would be useless: I should be nothing, do nothing, enjoy nothing."

It is, then, by society, and not by solitude, that I shall become what He desires I should become—society which will have a double effect upon me, free the self from its evil entanglements, enlarge the self with its virtues and varied powers.

Let us take an illustration of this in the contrast which the lives of Esau and Jacob present to us.

The case of Jacob is particularly helpful, because the Bible emphasizes the strange power of heredity over him in a remarkable way. It tells us that he was a transgressor from the womb*; that even before he was born there was a striking proof of that ambition which nearly wrecked his life; and that his mother, dwelling much on the thought of the future of her twins, looked upon this as an anticipation of his future success. It was no help to his character that she did so, for it encouraged in the growing lad thoughts that he had been much better without. Living much at home, possibly owing to delicate health, he was always talking over with his mother the greatness that belonged to the family as he heard his grandfather, Abraham, speak of it, and the hope that he might have a part in it. To have the birthright, which alone made it possible, became no longer a hope, but a determination. His brother's need gave him one opportunity, which he secured; his father's blindness and old age gave him another. He has no qualms of conscience about either; his only fear is lest he should be found out.

Now in all this we see what a powerful hold heredity had upon him. It was the old Syrian vice, so strongly developed in Laban, and

* *Is.* xlviii. 8. *Gen.* xxv. 26.

grafted into his setting through his mother, Rebekah. That he should get on, win his way, achieve success for himself and his, by foul means if not by fair, was in his blood. There was a power not himself making for destiny.

Esau, as we all feel, stands out to great advantage beside him. He is brave, generous, open-handed, chivalrous, loved by Isaac—the kind of man that impersonates the popular virtues. And he has the added good fortune of being the eldest son. To him the birth-right belongs. Life is peculiarly free to him. He has neither Jacob's physical weakness nor his moral limitations. Instinctively we like him, in spite of his disregard of the great promises that were bound up with his race. But he is as much indebted to his ancestry for the good that lies in him as Jacob for his vices. Abraham's courage and generosity reappear in him, as Laban's deceit in Jacob. He is not to be more praised than Jacob is to be blamed. Both have to some extent made the original stock which came to them their own; and the question as we see them standing at the outset of their careers is, what will they do with that which they have?

It is possible for Esau to become a second Abraham, and for Jacob to become a man like the Fagin of Dickens or the Shylock of Shakespeare. It is likely that Esau will become Israel; and Jacob become a Judas, if he retains,

indeed, a place in history at all. And yet the very opposite is what we see. Jacob becomes Israel, and Esau the founder of that predatory people who to this day are the terror of Palestine. The Edomite all through the centuries maintains his profane secularity, his hostility to God and His plans. The spirit is seen in our Lord's time, in the shifty, cunning Herod who sought His infant life; in the cowardly insincerity of the man who heard the Baptist and yet executed him; in the sensual Herod Agrippa, who was moved by S. Paul and yet went back to his sin.

It is a strange phenomenon this, and one seen again and again in human life: the one is taken, the other left; the unlikely, unpromising, carried forward to great things, the man of parts left—left to become a prey to devouring judgment; the one becoming a force, a personality, influencing succeeding generations, the other a nonentity, leaving, if he leaves anything, a poisonous slough that defiles all his posterity.

Now, if we seek for a reply to the question why the personality of the one, with its opportunities and advantages, seems to wither away, and that of the other, so cramped and confined, becomes larger and larger, impressing Egypt as well as Palestine, the answer lies in relationship. Personality is developed by relationship. Jacob is peculiarly the man of **relationships**—relationship with God and relationship with men.

Notice how clearly the former comes out. It is true that his behaviour to his brother and father does not even suggest any realization of Divine guidance, any sense of dependence on God. We might suppose that Jacob was an ungodly man, determined to wrest for himself that of which he thought he had been cruelly deprived by nature. It is Bethel that reveals Jacob's piety. Dreams are, more often than not, indications of character; and that which Jacob saw on the first night after leaving home is no uncertain sign of what his mind had been busy with during the lonely walk towards Syria. As Dr. Davidson says:—"God used the thoughts which had been working all day in his mind to attach His revelation to. This is the way in which revelation came, and perhaps still comes. It was made to fit into the circumstances and feelings of the man to whom it came." We cannot imagine the free and independent Esau dreaming of a spiritual ladder set up from earth to heaven.

Jacob, then, in spite of his self-will and impatience, is a man who recognizes his relationship with God as of first importance. He does not, it is true, yet know God as his Friend. He makes a kind of bargain, promising what he will do in the future if God will but help him; but he recognizes Him, prays to Him, believes in Him, and sets up on earth a token of his confidence in Him. It is the rough-

and-tumble experience of life in Syria that helps him to know Him, because it opens his eyes as to his sin and clears it away. In Laban's twenty-one years of cheating and trickery Jacob realizes how little cunning can do, as well as its hateful character. The substitution of one sister for another, the constant change of wages, the endeavour to rob him of his flocks, were of no avail. Though Laban held all the cards, he lost in the end. He had been outmatched, but not by his nephew. Jacob was no match for Laban. It was God who had stood his Friend; God Who suffered him not to hurt him. "God hath seen my affliction and the labour of my hands. . . Except the God of my father, the God of Abraham and the Fear of Isaac had been with me, surely now hadst thou sent me away empty." Jacob learned less and less to trust himself, more and more to trust God.

The Bible notes the spiritual change in the account of his return to his own home. He is a man to whom the other world is always opening out; who sees not only the material, but the spiritual beneath it, one to whom all things are double. As Dean Stanley writes: "Every incident and word is fraught with double meaning; in every instance earthly and spiritual images are put one over against the other, hardly to be seen in the English version, but in the original clearly intended. Other forms than his own company are surrounding him;

another Face than that of his brother Esau is to welcome his return to the land of his birth and kindred. He was become two 'bands,' or hosts; he had divided his people, his flocks and his herds and camels into two 'hosts'; he had sent 'messengers' before to announce his approach. But as Jacob went on his way, the messengers of God met him, as when he had seen them ascending and descending the stairs of heaven at Bethel; and when Jacob saw them he said, This is God's host; and he called the name of that place Mahanaim; that is, 'The Two Hosts.'**

It is evident from this that Jacob is in close relationship with God and the other world; and this friendship is sealed by the mysterious struggle at Peniel. There, though his family, friends, and property seem to be at the mercy of an avenging brother, he desires to know but one thing, and that, the Name of Him Whom he has been seeking ever since he left Bethel. It is then that Jacob passes into Israel, the "Supplanter" into "The Prince of God," the humble farmer's son into the Founder of the most persistently religious nation the world has known. He still has his troubles and sorrows—indeed, the two darkest have yet to come—but he has now a personality that is to be reckoned with, a personality so strong that it keeps together a family of wild, headstrong sons, hardly two of whom had anything in common but their reverence for him.

* *Jewish Church*, p. 54.

That is the second remarkable trait in Jacob's character, his affection for his own belongings. His relationship with God fostered, as it always does, his relationship with his wives, children, and friends. His parents; his Rachel, whom he loved with such devotion that the long seven years of service seemed but a few days; Deborah's nurse, who had followed him in his wanderings; Joseph, Benjamin, Leah, the handmaids, the sons; his life seems bound up with them all. Long after they passed away, men would halt at the Oak of Tears and recall the old nurse's fidelity, or reverently touch the pillar that the old man had put up to Rachel's memory. When Joseph is lost, it seems as though he will never get over it; when the sons insist that unless Benjamin goes with them to Egypt the family must starve, he feels he will die. And when at last the end comes, then all the sons, in spite of their quarrels and dissensions, gather round their father's bed to hear his last charge and receive his last blessing. Jacob is conspicuously a man of relationships, and it is through them that he gets clear of his old sin and becomes with Abraham and Isaac the patron of his country. He was a man of tenderest sympathies, many tears, struggles, and prayers, and through them becomes the Israel of God.

Esau, on the contrary, has no strong relationships. He marries for passion, not for love. When he finds that his parents dislike his

Canaanitish wives, he discards them and marries Ishmael's daughter. He is a man without a family history, without deep affections. Skilful in hunting, brave, daring, adventurous, he gathers together a band of men of like mind, and they occupy the land which was afterwards called by their name. They contribute nothing to the world's advancement, leave neither writings nor marks of civilization. By the sword they lived, a race of hunters for generations.

Such is the contrast. Its lesson on the development of personality is clear. Only by degrees do we escape from that "body of death" which would rob us of freedom and make us simply a limb of the past, without character or individuality. Slowly, by the discipline of experience, and still more by the power of that love on which our relationship with God and others is based, the self gets purged. We are led, on the one hand, to realize the nearness of the spiritual kingdom and the reality of God's presence; and on the other, the varied claims of kinsfolk and friends. Faith pulls us out in one direction and love in another; and so the character, enlarged and deepened, not only effects something here, but is bound to effect something in the world to come.

And if we ask what practice it is that keeps all these relationships open, the answer is clear. Jacob came out as he did in the end, because

he was pre-eminently a man of prayer. There are but few, even of God's saints, who, on the eve of a terrible crisis when all may be lost, will spend the whole night in prayer. That Jacob did so is a proof that prayer was a great and important business with him. It was not an opportunity to be briefly despatched because a good night's rest was so important in the view of to-morrow's peril. He was evidently not accustomed to suppose that a brief upward glance would effect a great issue. Prayer with him was struggle, a definite struggle to bring his own will into submission to God's, and to know God's mind. He was not imprudent. He had done all that he could to pacify his brother; and now he must not merely, as we say, leave the rest with God, but try to find out what God's will in the matter was. That was the one important thing. It is true that he was injured in that protracted struggle. He was never again the same man physically. Like another, greater than he, he bore to the last on his body "the marks of the Lord Jesus." But he doubtless recognized that, so great was the revelation, that without this physical pain to remind him of his weakness he might have lost his head and become presumptuous. To have seen God face to face was an extraordinary reward to prayer. Such a vision demanded the greatest possible reverence. Jacob's pain kept him chastened and humbled. It would be interesting to shew by

illustrations from the lives of the saints how great a part prayer has played in the development of personality; and yet it is hardly necessary. It would be difficult to name any man who has helped the world forward into larger freedom and truth who has not been a man of prayer. As Cardinal Ximenes is reported to have said, "To pray is to govern."

CHAPTER V.

PERSONALITY AND ELOQUENCE.

MOSES AND BALAAM.

IT is, we have seen, through our relationship with others, especially with Him from Whom we come and to Whom we go, that we become our true selves, reach our perfection.

But relationship implies on our part the ability to express ourselves. The man who cannot pray must find his fellowship with God an abstract matter, an idea rather than a reality. The man who cannot talk is not likely to receive much help from the society in which he finds himself. All those directions in which the self is likely to be drawn out, teaching, ruling, influencing, seem walled against one who can never explain what he means.

Expression, then, seems bound up with development of personality; and many a man, finding that he has no power in that way, not only believes that he is shut out from influence, but takes a wrong measure of himself and despises the heritage God has given him. "Why was I sent into the world at all?" is the question

angrily and impatiently asked by those who are not only awkward in speech but uncouth in body. They are vexed that their personality should always be facing them with features and stature that excite ridicule, and only expressed through a stammering and stuttering tongue. They envy the ready speaker, the man so easily at home with others, who is always regarded as an attractive personality. And it is undeniable that at first such appear to be hopelessly handicapped. They occupy no position, because it is agreed that they cannot put two words together. They never appear to be wanted. They have but few friends. If relationship with others is the main sphere for self-development, then the self must remain stunted. Such are tempted to live more and more apart from a Society that has no occasion for them, and to become the very reverse of that which they were intended to be. They are awkward instead of free, self-conscious instead of natural, narrow instead of broad, cynical instead of sympathetic.

But as against the relationship of the past, which we call heredity, we placed the relationship of the present; so against the disadvantages of an expressionless self, we place the power of silence. A very few words may show its need. Relationship does affect our personality strongly, and does develop men quickly. Again and again it has been noticed how boys have grown in the wider school-life, how men have grown in the intimacy of married life. But there are

dangers. The self may be overpowered by the influence of a strong personality. Its own individuality may lose its particular quality through over-modesty. It may become an echo of another, a mere imitation so far as is possible of the person to whom it is attracted. It loses its independence, its strength, its virility. Reverence may degenerate into an idolatry so extreme that self is practically lost in another, and its own separate God-given peculiarity merged in the strong personality of its hero.

Who has not known of relationships which have this paralysing effect: of wives that are the echoes of their husbands, friends that are the imitations of their companions, disciples that are copies of their masters? For all such the words, "It is expedient for you that I go away," have a clear meaning. That departure, or removal, however, may have wider effects than we wish, and all that is imperilled by an excessive admiration may be saved by the power of silence.

Perhaps, in these days especially, too much cannot be said in praise of silence. "Were this an altar building time," writes Carlyle, "altars might still be raised to silence and secrecy," for "silence is the element in which great things fashion themselves, that at length they may emerge full formed and majestic into the daylight of life which thenceforth they are to rule." Bees will not work except in darkness, thought will not work except in silence, neither

will virtue work except in secrecy. As Emerson says most truly: "Real action is in silent moments. The epochs of our lives are not in the visible facts of a calling, our marriage, our acquisition of an office and the like, but in a silent thought by the wayside as we walk, in a thought which revises our entire manner of life."

And by silence is not meant hours with book or pen, when the brain is working hard, but the quiet of reception, when, being in harmony with God in nature and in man, we allow the Spirit to fill us. It is the silence of attention and listening. We believe in the reality of the Lord our God walking in the garden of His world, and we prick up our ears to catch the sound of His footsteps and to hear His still, small voice. We feel the presence of a Universal Will bearing upon us and upon all things, and we are conscious that our strength and growth come through allowing It to reach us in whatever way It will, whether it be by pain or ease, health or sickness, work or rest. Such silent uplifting moments are like the rest we gain after climbing a high mountain, from the top of which we see, on the one hand, hotels, houses, and cottages all equally small, and on the other a wide sweep of peaks, hills, and valleys, which gives us a sense of the real bigness of things. Our ideas take shape from the view we contemplate, we "become what we see," grow large with the greatness of that which enwraps us, and realize for a brief moment what it means to live and move and have our being in God.

Our attitude at such times is that which we adopt in listening to some favourite preacher. We settle ourselves, shut out all other thoughts, and just give ourselves to him. Our expectation is that which we have, as we wait for the first note that is to reach us from the great violinist: we are still, inwardly and outwardly. So, too, as we sit in our room, or lie on our backs on the sofa, or walk up and down in our garden, we think not of what we have been doing or saying, or of what we shall do, but of what God is doing. We are passive, and let His Spirit fill our being. Gradually one earthly thought after another leaves the self, and we feel we are resting on the bosom of God. All painful, disturbing thoughts are "lost in the consciousness of Divine nearness, just as though a particle of sunlight should become aware of its relation to all sunlight and the sun." And so we gain respect for our expressionless selves, and rejoice in the knowledge that we, too, are instruments of the Divine Will. The distinctions between a Plato and the slave that faithfully serves him, between a Shakespeare and the workman who is doing his best to shift the scenes, a S. John and the scribe who sits at his feet writing the Gospel, are seen to be small in the presence of Universal Wisdom.

But it is time to put this thought into concrete shape and illustrate its truths.

If we could find a man with unusual gifts of expression, gifted with the inspiration of a

prophet and an unusual power of impressing others with what he said, and contrast him with one who had thoughts he could never make plain, who was silent, awkward, and embarrassed, we should then be able to see how far the gift of expression carries a man, how far it develops his personality; and how far, too, its absence dwarfs and stunts it.

For our purpose we could hardly find better examples than Balaam and Moses, the one the eloquent, the other the silent prophet.

Balaam—the Gentile prophet, as he has been called—must have been a man of remarkable personality, or, rather, of a personality that was endowed with remarkable expression. His influence was such that it was felt all through the East that he had but to speak and it was done. If he cursed, it was thought blight followed in the track of his words; if he blessed, sunshine and joy lighted up the home or land where his words fell. And such traces of his power as have been handed down convince us that he is amongst the few really eloquent men the world has heard. And as is the case with probably all very great speakers, he realized that he did not himself create his moving speeches, but that he was inspired from above. He describes himself as one who heard the words of God, saw the vision of the Almighty, falling into a trance and having his eyes open. And he feels his power is limited by God; he would not go beyond the word of the Lord to say less or more.

He is typical, then, of all those who, having the power to express great thoughts in moving language, are the envy of the world. It may be the preacher, or the writer, or the gifted musician, or the skilled artist: they, we feel, are the world's personalities; they move, impress, and leave their mark on their generation. Their danger is that of Balaam's. They know that they must feel, if they are to be effective, that they must be inspired if they are to move the multitudes. But they look for their inspiration to the moment when they require it, not to their life; they expect to get the fire kindled when they are at it, not in the quiet spaces of sober thought before the hour arrives. The cause for which they speak, play, or act matters less than the occasion. It will be the expectation that they are going to do great things that will animate them, rather than any moral motive.

Balaam probably cared but little for Moab or Israel: to him it mattered but little which prevailed; but it mattered much that he should not miss this great opportunity. To refuse a position for which he felt he was so well qualified and for which he had such great gifts was not to be thought of. He had no notion which side he would eventually take, but he knew himself well enough to be sure that he would do justice to the situation. And he had but little doubt that he would be effective. No one before had been able to withstand the torrent of his irresistible eloquence, and Balak will either triumph over

the picture of Israel's downfall or, moved by the persuasive oratory of the prophet, yield to the destiny which the prophet will predict with matchless power. In any case, he will say Amen to Balaam's sermon.

And yet that is just what he will not do. Balaam's splendid declamation has no effect on Balak's conscience. He grows more and more indignant with the outrageous impertinence of the prophet, and at last, clapping his hands in fierce impatience, bids him be off at once. It is then that Balaam learns the limitations of his gifts, then that he recognizes that the most inspired and moving eloquence has no power to touch unless the whole personality, moral and spiritual, is behind it. It was a bitter and crushing disappointment, and drove him, as it has done hundreds of others, to low and coarse devices to regain his power.

How many a great artist, musician, and actor has been moved to adopt methods which they confess are poor and degrading, because they have been disappointed with the reception the public gave their best. In a fit of ill-humour they declare they will give men what they want rather than what they ought to have, forgetting that their failure was less due to the ideal they presented than to the fact that it was a shadow, felt in spite of its beauty to be unreal, a fancy spun out of the man's brain rather than a life worked out of his heart. Not seldom, in sermons as well as in musical or dramatic expressions,

we have found ourselves saying: "Yes, it was magnificent, but somehow it failed to carry me away, hardly touched me, for the man wasn't in it."

"Noblesse oblige" applies perhaps more to the gifted than to the noble; for though the greater the gifts the more imperative the necessity for whole-hearted consecration, the temptation is to believe the reverse. "As long as I take care of my talents, I can leave the rest of me to take care of itself." Yet experience shows again and again that it is the personality that tells, that the most surprising power in technique or manipulation, the most remarkable skill in rhetoric or the use of language, never can make up for the loss of reality, always felt when the expression appears larger than the man.

Moses offers an interesting contrast to Balaam; for though a man of large experience gained in barracks and courts, in ecclesiastical and political circles, accustomed to deal with men and affairs, yet he has no power of expression. He is slow, inarticulate, well-nigh dumb, a man of action rather than speech. When his soul is on fire with the injustice his countrymen labour under, he does not gather them together to move them with words of burning eloquence, but strikes, and then has to flee the country. That failure to impress his own people led him to seek the solitudes of the desert. It was clear that he was not their deliverer; and he turned with thankful-

ness to that silent communion with God which had always been his great consolation. And so fifty years pass away, in which Egypt with its gaiety, pride, and political ambitions, Israel with its stupid indifference to its hard condition, fade away. No echo of what is going on there reaches him. In that desert of mountain peaks, vast solitudes unbroken save by the bleating of the sheep, the cry of the bird, or the roll of the thunder, Moses became the friend of God. The little home he had found with Jethro just supplied the foil to days of long, unbroken silence, in which he heard nothing but the voice of God. He learnt to know Him, to understand intuitively His mind, and to enjoy with a joy that no human friendship can parallel that spiritual communion with perfect Wisdom and Love which is the bliss of the redeemed.

It was at the close of this second period that there came the summons to action. He is to leave the desert, go to Egypt, and emancipate a million slaves. The task for anyone was superhuman, but for Moses it was made impossible by his inability to speak. Suppose he did go, how would he ever be able to explain the character of Him who sent him? They shall say to me, What is His Name? What shall I say to them? How could he without any gifts of persuasion or eloquence make them believe that he was really sent to be their leader? Behold, they will not believe me, nor hearken to my voice! And no one knew better than he how he would

he laughed at in the Court of Pharaoh when he tried, in his broken, stammering way, to make clear God's astounding claims. Who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh? At every turn, as he thought over this strange commission, he was beset by this difficulty of expression. At last he came out with it: "And Moses said unto the Lord, I am not eloquent, neither heretofore, nor since Thou hast spoken unto Thy servant: for I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue." It seems as though he had expected that, like the apostles, he would have been suddenly endowed with the gift of expression. But no; "neither heretofore, nor since Thou hast spoken to Thy servant." No doubt he felt that the difficulty he had always experienced in getting his thoughts out had been sensibly increased by fifty years' solitude. There is the promise that this difficulty will be overcome; but to Moses, even though God says it, it seems impossible; and Aaron is appointed to be his mouth, to express that which he finds he has no power to do.

But dumb, silent, inarticulate as Moses is, he accomplishes the greatest task known in history. He not only liberates the slaves, but does that which is far more difficult: welds them into a commonwealth, gives them a worship, a law, and settled ordinances. The work is a triumph of Silence, for out of Silence it came forth.

This man has no temptation at any time to rely upon himself, because he is always conscious

of a fatal self-limitation. The riots and revolts that now and again take place he meets not with words, but with quiet faith. When "the waves rage horribly," he betakes himself to the Tent of Communion. When the people are engaged in battle, soldier though he be, he is occupied on the mountain top in silent prayer. When Sinai is reached, and there is at last opportunity for organizing this host of slaves into something like social life, then the great leader disappears into the mists that veil the peak, and there remains for six weeks. It is nothing to him that so much requires to be done, so many arrangements to be made. It is useless for Aaron or the other leaders to urge that such an absence is fraught with peril, it is the only condition on which the work can be done. The harder the task, the more important the quiet time with God; the more complicated the business, the more necessary the silence. As Luther would say, "I have a hard day's work before me, and I must get four hours alone with God." And though it is true that there is a mad outbreak of idolatry, apparently in consequence of his absence, Moses does not regret that he was away, for both he and they have learned what they could have learned in no other way. They have realized afresh that the Invisible God is their King, swift to avenge iniquity; and he, in that short space, has had imprinted in his mind and soul all those elementary principles of worship and government that made the Jewish Church.

Could we have a better illustration of the power of silence? And those who, like Moses, feel their inability to express themselves, who bewail their self limitation, may take comfort to themselves from his example, and know that there are other ways in which Personality can fulfil its task; that great and many as are the blessings which eloquence and artistic expression have conferred on the world, they are not unattended by grave dangers.

The paths of orators, musicians, artists, and poets are strewn with wreckage. Like Balaam, they have been inspired with Divine truth and the power to impart it, but, like him, they have so often been led astray by the popularity their gifts have excited, and failed to make the foundation good.

It is otherwise with the silent. Whether in the humble work of ruling a home, or in the more distinguished duty of commanding an army, whether guiding the affairs of a great school or of a small country parish, they are almost always effective, and give a meaning to Bishop Creighton's paradox, that "more important than the things we do are the things we do not do, and more important than the things we say are the things we do not say."

Perhaps the whole chapter could not be better summed up than in the striking words Milton quotes about the true poet: "I was confirmed in this opinion, that he who would not be frustrate in his hope to write well hereafter in laudable

things, ought himself to be a true poem ; that is, a composition and pattern of the best and honourablest things ; not presuming to sing high praises of heroic men or famous cities, unless he have in himself the experience and practice of all that is praiseworthy."*

But that is compassed in the silent hours. We may be compelled to live much of our lives in the public eye of men, to talk over this and discuss that, but we should never forget the rule laid down for us by the One who made us : "Six days shalt thou labour, but the seventh is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God. In it thou shalt do no manner of work : " words which apply not only to the week, but to every day. The soul that forces itself into solitude with God for nearly four hours in each day is likely to make the best music, because the strings are not worn with perpetual strumming. If Havelock, on those critical forced marches when all was depending on speed, always got two hours before he marched, no matter what time they struck camp ; if Gordon, on his busiest days, would never be without his quiet, those who are less strenuous and less weighted with great affairs, can, if they will, find a long space in each day when they may be quiet with God.

* Quoted by Rev. L. R. Inge in *Faith and Knowledge*, p. 229.

CHAPTER VI.

PERSONALITY* AND POSITION.

SAMUEL AND ELI.

THERE is one feature that is always prominent in those who are strong personalities, and that is a unity of purpose, a concentration of mind, a fixed determination which pursues its object steadily and without wavering. Whether it be a statesman, a general, a merchant, or a minister of God, they are all alike in this, that their motto is that of S. Paul, "One thing I do."

And this unity of purpose is what religious people call consecration. It is the separation of one duty, one ambition, one resolve from all others, and giving it the prominent place in the life. It is the application to human life of that which is often done with buildings, vessels, and the like. The churches that are used for one object, the sacred vessels that are set apart for the Holy Communion, the Bible that is put into a place of its own, the military banner that is hung in some cathedral, all speak clearly of the meaning of consecration. And we feel that things so consecrated get a kind of virtue by

reason of their consecration. They are different from other things of the kind, and have a certain halo of romance thrown about them.

So, too, when consecration is applied to human life: the men and women who are known to be separate have a distinction of their own. It may be some dark purpose, a feeling of revenge which seeks to be satisfied; or some ambitious aim, a family estate to be won back, a name to be won; or it may be some philanthropic resolve, such as that which has animated a Wilberforce, a Shaftesbury, a Howard; or some religious undertaking, such as that which has inspired a Livingstone, a Carey, a Patten; but, whatever it is, you feel it has a power of its own, and strongly determines personality.

And the word "saint," so widely misunderstood, testifies to the distinction consecration gives to it, meaning one who is consecrated to the will of God. He may be very imperfect, very human; but so far as he recognizes as a principle of his life that he would rather do the will of God than anyone else's, he is a saint, a consecrated man.

Now consecration, as we have said, is essential to personality. Without it no one can hope to be his own true self. The life that is not animated by it, that is finding its sustenance in work that has no proper relation to self—the man, for example, who is in an office when he ought to be in the ministry, or who is in the ministry when he ought to be in

business; the man who is a lawyer when he ought to be a soldier, or a sailor when he ought to be in medicine; the woman who is at home when she ought to be in the mission field, a nurse when she ought to be a teacher—is continually hindered in self-development. Such have no freedom, no gathering of interest as life goes forward. They are continually feeling the desire to change, to abandon what they have for something else; and the self, unless it should find something by the way which moves it in its true direction, is stationary—the man hardly larger than the child.

But for this unity of purpose it is necessary that a man should have a sense of vocation: He must feel that he is sent to do that which he is doing; that it has waited for him; has been prepared and reached that stage in which his particular faculties are best able to deal with it. He ought to be able to give no uncertain answer if he be asked the question addressed to a candidate for the ministry—"Do you think that you are truly called, according to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ?" He ought to know as readily as the Deacon, and his sense of vocation ought to be as deep and real.

And yet, whilst a vocation for the ministry is thought to be essential, men are comparatively careless whether there is a vocation for the law, medicine, the exchange, the bank, the shop, the trade; as though God's eye was only on one little thread of life, His care only for the

ministry, His business only that of shepherding souls.

Now, granted that there is a real vocation, a definite and divine purpose for every life, a good work already prepared for the soul to begin upon, then there must be a readiness for the sacrifice involved in consecration. Narrowness of a sort is inevitable. "Jack of all trades and master of none" is of infinite application. Life is not long enough, nor is the soul large enough, to pursue all the roads that are open. It is not the clergyman only, but everyone, who must be diligent in such studies as help to the knowledge of his profession, laying aside the study of the world and the flesh. His home, his friends, his recreations must all look one way.

Darwin has been criticized for allowing his taste for music and letters to be starved away in his devotion to science; but it is a question whether he would have made the discovery of evolution without it. Sir James Paget has been blamed for his indifference to social reform, indeed to all politics; but he was probably right when he said that a man did more good if he kept to his own business, doing that with all his soul, and not dissipating his energies in directions outside his own particular range; that every cobbler should stick to his last; and that, by obedience to that rule, the affairs of the world at large would come straight. And doubtless Sir E. Burne-Jones was chided for keeping so much to himself; but he rightly

looked upon an artist as a dedicated man, with as real a responsibility to discharge as any other. "What do we want to be wrenched from our work for," he would say in reply to those who would tempt him away; "I should like to stop in this room for 439 years, and never be taken out of it."*

Everyone, indeed, if he is to develop as God intended him, must stick to the narrow path, whether it lead to a Nazareth or a London. Even the Son of Man confessed to being narrowed till His baptism was accomplished.

Many a man is tempted to forsake this single purpose by the opportunities which a high position offers. He is called from his studio to the House of Lords, from his students' table to the episcopal bench, from his scientific studies to the presidency of a college; and, with but few exceptions, the result is failure. He was a good student, but a bad bishop; an admirable lecturer, but a bad political speaker. Position, which we imagine will do so much for personality, not seldom has the opposite effect in drawing attention to the fact that the man's personality is not big enough for the place.

Take Eli for an example. No one in Jewish history occupied such a splendid position as he did. For many years he was judge and high priest at the same time. He was, indeed, a kind of Melchizedek. All the power, whether civil or ecclesiastical, was in his hands. And it was a position that he had obtained in some way

* Scott Holland, *Personal Studies*, pp. 197, 261.

not known to us ; he was not marked out for it by birth or greatness of character. By birth, indeed, he was not in the line for the priesthood. How the change was made we are not told. But we do know this, that Eli is a conspicuous failure. He can master neither his own house nor the State. His sons are a scandal to the whole community, and it is hinted that he himself was not free from that spirit of covetousness which has always haunted great positions. He receives stern warnings, recognizes their justice, and does nothing. And yet he is the head of Church and State. His growing physical blindness is only an indication of the spiritual darkness in which his own soul is wrapped. He sees nothing and hears nothing, though he is the natural channel for the communication of divine revelation. A woman's earnestness in prayer he takes to be a sign of drunkenness, and the messages of God are left to a little child to interpret. Doubtless he had distinguished himself at one time of his life, or he would never have been high priest and judge. But the change to this high position, instead of calling out the best that was in him, seems to have stunted his further development. The position was too large for him, and the efforts to fill it exhausted him ; and so he became a shifty, irresolute, weary old man.

Take Samuel by way of contrast. He has no particular gifts of birth or position. He has only

this one advantage, that from his earliest years his life had been marked by unity of purpose, and it is to his everlasting credit that he never left the narrow path along which the purpose pointed. His work in the temple, as an acolyte and attendant on the old priest, must have been of the simplest character. Such a school, some might suppose, would develop a proud, narrow, bigoted man; yet history tells us that others beside Samuel, nay, some of the greatest thinkers and leaders, had their early home in the monastery. His purpose in life was at first of the most general character, to be the Lord's servant as long as he lived. And for that he must know the Lord. The Nazarite vow helped him to realize the separateness of his life; and though the opportunities of learning divine truth in that dissolute age must have been very few, he used all so diligently that he became known as "the Seer"; in other words, he grew up to know that business for which he had been sent into the world, thoroughly well. In the eyes of the world it was a very narrow life; aloof from the home life of the farm, from the field life of the soldier, from the commercial life of the trader. Interested in all, as we know him from his subsequent life to have been, yet that was not his work, and to his work he confined himself. He had early felt the touch of the supernatural, and had realized in the dark nights, when all was still, the awful nearness of the Presence of God, dwelling scarce a few yards away between the cherubim

and the mystery of the Holy of Holies. The House of the Lord was his home ; its outward symbols—the lamp, the table of shewbread, the altar of incense—his centres of religious romance ; the sacred stories of the past, his history and geography ; the men whom he met from time to time, who had known or served under Gideon or Jephthah, his heroes.

That the Lord should speak to him was natural enough. The strange thing was that He should tell him, a child, the fate of Eli's family. That revelation, so quickly verified, made him realize that he was gifted with the faculty of divine insight. He could see, and was perhaps the only man in the country that could. He became God's interpreter in things great and small. Men sought his counsel about everything. If anything was missing, if any trouble was impending, it was natural to send to the Seer ; for Seer was now his name, and one that he himself recognized. And, endowed with this power, he naturally succeeded Eli as judge, for men like their rulers to be able to interpret the signs of the times. And though cloister bred, he was found, as the true men of God always are found, to be a good general as well as a great statesman. By his courage he rolled back the invasion of the Philistines, so that they came no more within the border of Israel during his rule ; and by his statesmanship he bridged over successfully that transitional period in a nation's life when it is passing through a most difficult political crisis.

The passage from a Theocracy to a Monarchy was so dangerous that it would have been no great surprise if the ship of the State had gone to pieces. That it made its journey successfully was due entirely to Samuel's skilful steering. And the skilful steering was due to Samuel's character rather than his worldly wisdom, to his knowledge of God rather than his knowledge of men. "Because," writes Dean Stanley, "in him the various parts of his life hung together without any abrupt transition; because in him the child was father of the man, and his days had been bound each to each by natural piety; therefore he was especially ordained to bind together the broken links of two diverging epochs; therefore he could impart to others, and to the age in which he lived, the continuity which he had experienced in his own life; therefore he could gather round him the better spirits of his time by that discernment of a pure heart which sees through heaven and hell."* He knew how events were trending, what their inevitable issue must be; and in spite of personal disappointment, maintained his hope to the end. If Saul failed, God would provide another to fill his place.

It is unnecessary to give more than this sketch, for it is sufficient to show the power of a divinely consecrated life. It will be seen how the narrow training issues in the broadest possible conception of God and the State; how the man who realized his vocation as God's servant becomes

* Stanley, *Jewish Church*, p. 350.

the best servant of his fellow-men ; how the child who is content to begin as a server in the Lord's House afterwards becomes a ruler in the wider field of the world ; how one who sees and hears God, sees and hears everything.

It is sometimes supposed that the man who has had a broader life, seen the world, sown his wild oats, and reaped a bitter experience, is thereby made more capable of entering sympathetically into the weaknesses and infirmities of men ; and it is true that men like Augustine have, through their knowledge of men's weaknesses and vices, become sympathetic directors of conscience ; but few have done this without an expense of strength which robs their influence of a great deal of power. It is only a Samuel, who has kept an even path from the beginning, that can deal with a man whom he loves with a passionate devotion in the straight, clear way he deals with Saul. It is only a Samuel who can without flinching take one of the triumphs of a great success and, in the presence of his king, then and there hew it in pieces before the Lord. It is only a Samuel who can publicly take the whole nation to task, expose its wickedness, and make it acknowledge its sin. His strength was the strength of ten, because he was pure.

Many and many a parent is ready to risk the soiling of a lad's soul by sending him to a great school because of the valuable experience of life he is likely to gain thereby. But whilst it is true

the example of Samuel gives no encouragement to parents who cannot sacrifice their affection for a child's good, who have too small a trust in God's goodness to allow him to be away from home, yet it points to such a selection as may lead to education in the knowledge of God and His righteousness rather than the ways of men and their vices. It is essential that the direction of the life be set right, that the child from his very earliest years should be taught to regard his life as a dedicated one, and himself as given to the Lord. The particular field in which his work is to be done will afterwards be made plain ; it is his part to feel that he, too, is on the King's business.

It is said that it is impossible for everyone to find out what he or she is to do. It is, of course, impossible to know the whole plan. Hannah could not have guessed that Samuel was to be a judge, a founder of the School of Prophets, the greatest statesman that had been since Moses. All she could see was that he was placed where he could learn the will of God ; and this she did. Samuel could not tell what office he would fill, what God would tell him to do, but he could make his life as a temple server as complete as possible, and so make himself ready for the next thing. And faithfulness in little things marks out a man for great things. Consecration is not easy nor simple. It implies continuous selection ; and selection always implies trouble. But it is in the process of selection that the personality

grows and is determined. It is in every choice that it takes a fuller shape. As it goes along the path determined of God, it grows into the likeness of His Son; not, indeed, that full Image which reflects all the sons of men, but that particular likeness after which it was created. And whether men accomplish much or little, they accomplish that which God intended them to accomplish.

So through this determined set of character, this resolute habit of doing from hour to hour that which the Lord wills, Samuel became one of the great personal forces of the world, and especially of his own nation. As Dean Stanley beautifully says: "His long, protracted life was like the shadow of the great rock of an older epoch projected into the level of a modern age. 'He judged Israel all his life': even after the monarchy had sprung up, he was still a witness of an earlier and more primitive state. Whatever murmurs or complaints had arisen were always hushed for the moment before his presence. They leaned upon him, they looked back to him even from after ages, as their fathers had leaned upon Moses. . . . And when the hour of his death came, we are told with a peculiar emphasis of expression that all the Israelites—not one portion or fragment only, as might have been expected in that time of division and confusion—were gathered together round him who had been the father of all alike, and lamented him, and buried him not in any sacred

spot or secluded sepulchre, but in the midst of the home which he had consecrated only by his own long, unblemished career, 'in his house at Ramah.'"* His was a great life, but it is only one of many that bear witness to the power of consecration. In their measure, and for the same reason, the lives of George Herbert, John Keble, and Richard Church, to name three English Churchmen, were great. They may not loom so large in the tale of histories, but in the sight of God, who measures the greatness of men by their nearness to the end He purposes for them, they were great; for one purpose they had in view, and that one purpose they followed.

* *Jewish Church*, I., p. 337-351.

CHAPTER VII.

PERSONALITY AND OPPORTUNITIES.

DAVID AND SAUL.

WE have seen the power of personal relationship in the life of Jacob, and the power of consecration to His service in that of Samuel. It may be well to see these two in combination, in the power of obedience, the sense of duty to God.

We are told that we only become perfectly free, *i.e.*, perfectly ourselves, when we perfectly serve; that so long as our lives are at cross purposes with His will for us, we are never able to strike out quite freely and easily. Directly we realize that His will pervades all life, physical as well as moral, that the weather which so often tries us, as well as the everchanging circumstances which fret us, are all expressions of His universal will, then the absurdity of trying to run counter to it is manifest. We may ask Him to modify it, believing, as we do, in His own perfect freedom; we may have confidence that He will in His own way make all things work together for good to them that love Him; but to

oppose Him, to assert our will against His, to fly in His face ; to say, as some are inclined to say after a crushing disappointment, "Well, I shall go my own way now ; I have tried the other path, and it brings nothing but mortification," is to court disaster and ruin. It is as though some feeble insect should try to make headway against an Atlantic gale, or a minnow endeavour to swim up the falls of Niagara, or a child with a pail of water try to put out a raging fire. The whole life will be inevitably ground to powder in such an encounter.

And yet, though the matter is so clear theoretically, obedience is not an easy thing to learn. We do not learn it by singing beautiful hymns about it ; by repeating with devotion "Thy way, not mine, O Lord," or "My God, my Father, while I stray" ; nor by hearing exhortations about it ; but by practising it. He, the Christ, learned obedience by the things that He suffered ; and we can learn in no other way.

We may, however, point out such features of obedience as specially belong to the particular subject we are studying. And, in the first place, obedience, or duty—for they both mean the same—is as much a characteristic of strong personalities as unity of purpose. It is, indeed, the same virtue under different circumstances. Unity of purpose is the thread which runs through all life, obedience is that part of it which is strained under difficult or trying circumstances. It is questionable whether there is such a thing as

unconscious obedience. We do not really obey till we overcome the desire to disobey. God, then, who desires of us the freedom of perfect obedience, must necessarily allow, if He does not order, circumstances, when to obey requires effort. He feels the same interest that a father feels in his son when he sends him out on some difficult errand which will try his loyalty and affection.

Consequently, all the really great people the world has seen have been those who have stood firm again and again in spite of strong temptation to do otherwise. Apparently they were only animated by a sense of duty to the public good, by patriotism, loyalty to home and friends, but behind these—or, rather, in them, as its expression—there lay the perfect will of God. Unconsciously they were following Him, unconsciously they were learning His will, and so attaining to freedom. Whether it is Washington taking up the burden of making an army to fight for the freedom of his country, or Wellington standing firm at Waterloo and Nelson fighting to the death at Trafalgar, there is the same obedience, though not perhaps of the same trying character as S. Paul had when he said he was ready to be bound and to die at Jerusalem.

And not only the important, but the small occasions, when we are called upon to face the cold and minister to a poor man in a bare, icy room instead of sitting by the fire in a comfortable chair; to write a trying letter instead

of enjoying a game in the field; to master a difficult problem instead of reading a novel; to go steadily on with the next duty after a life-long hope has been killed; to do what we are told, though it means humiliation, because we are under authority; to be still and silent under sharp provocation, are also illustrations how obedience is constantly being tested.

Perhaps there is no finer test of obedience than in a recognition of authority when it is contrary to our judgment. It may be that we are told by authority to take a certain action or to give up a certain practice which concerns others as well as ourselves. Obedience will mean a public slight, a humiliation. It is not merely giving up our own will, but humbling ourselves, though we feel sure we are right. The enemy will laugh us to scorn. We shall be called "turncoats" or cravens. And just in proportion as our personality is strong, we shall feel the pain of obedience. Our obedience will then be worth something. For the obedient is not the spiritless, unintelligent drone that always does what he is told because it is least trouble, because it is easier to obey than not, but the man who, having a will and mind in strong opposition to the voice of authority, puts them under his heel.

There are few finer stories of obedience than that of Fénelon, the Prince—Archbishop of Cambrai. When his book was condemned by the Pope and cardinals, a book his own judg-

ment told him to be orthodox and helpful, he accepted the public rebuke without a sign of protest. He received the news that the book was proscribed just as he was about to preach to his people in the cathedral. He at once laid aside his sermon, preached on obedience, and shewed that he could practice what he preached by the following letter, which he sent to all the clergy :—

“Our holy Father, the Pope, has condemned the book entitled ‘Explication des Maximes des Saints’ in a brief which is spread abroad everywhere, and which you have already seen. We give our adhesion to this brief, dear brethren, as regards the text of the book and the twenty-three points simply, absolutely, and without a shadow of doubt; and we forbid the faithful of the diocese to read or retain the book. God grant that we may never be spoken of save as a pastor who strove to be more docile than the least sheep of the flock, and whose submission knew no limit. Dear brethren, may the grace of God be with you all. Amen.

“FRANÇOIS, ARCHBISHOP AND DUKE OF CAMBRAI.”

It must have caused him much suffering to feel that he was looked upon as a heretic, that his enemies were triumphing over his submission; but he felt, and no doubt he was right, that obedience would bring a greater blessing to the Church than any protest. And obedience is always allied to power. The obedient, and only the obedient, rule. The disobedient wife cannot govern her household; the disobedient clergyman cannot rule his congregation; the refractory officer always finds his regiment in disorder;

the pupil who has never learnt to obey cannot keep discipline in the class he is called to teach. Such have never learnt the tact, the prudence, the sympathy which are born of obedience. Like Saul, they fancy they know what obedience means—indeed, like him, they think that they are obedient—and yet they fail; and failing, miss that fulness of being, which they were destined to enjoy.

How much Saul had to make him a really great man. In physique he was every inch a king, taller by the shoulders upward than any of his fellows. In manner he was attractive and engaging, winning the affection and devotion of both Samuel and David. In public he was gallant, brave, liberal, right royal; and in private he was an example not only to his own, but to succeeding ages. "As an Oriental ruler his almost immaculate moral life was a singular phenomenon, and, as we know, in striking contrast with that of David."*

Further, he had a unique opportunity of using the gifts God had given him. As the first King of Israel, called of God, elected by the popular will, anointed by the last ruler, who stood by him as his warm friend and minister, he had advantages that few men have. He knew that he was called of God, and therefore would have power to become a great king; and yet he was a hopeless failure, and on this ground only, that he had no sense of duty to Him Who called

* Davidson, *The Called of God*, p. 147.

him, no real hold of obedience. Not that he was irreligious; on the contrary, he was superstitiously religious, but his religion never had strong and permanent hold of his will. He would obey when there was no particular temptation to disobey; but if placed in a real difficulty, it was only too likely that he would shelter his disobedience under a partial compliance.

Two occasions, both regarded as critical, are mentioned as shewing this. In the one, he had to endure the trying suspense of waiting to attack an aggressive and powerful enemy till Samuel arrived. The time of waiting was fixed, but his patience was sorely tried by the desertion of his own men. Every day his force became smaller. One who believed in the Divine Will would have remembered how Gideon's army was reduced, and yet conquered, and how God delights to save with a few; but Saul was angered at the prophet's delay and the frequent reports that reached him of the numbers who left his standard. At last he could stand it no longer. As Samuel had not come, they would have their prayers and sacrifices and begin the campaign without him. After all, he had waited till within a few hours of the time. Saul shewed here, as all the disobedient shew, that he could not be trusted. A lieutenant who thus ignored the order of his general officer would be dismissed. Who was directing the campaign, Saul or God? If the latter, then Saul's excuse, "I forced myself," was absurd, and the en-

deavour to get the blessing of One Whose will he was breaking by offering sacrifices was ridiculous.

The other case was similar in spirit, though different in circumstances. He had been told to destroy the Amalekites and all they possessed. It was to be a war of consecration, a holy war. Such a sacrifice of the honours and spoils of war would shew surrounding peoples that, whatever might be the motive, it was not selfish. There was a brilliant success, and the whole of the Amalekite army, with all their cattle and stores, fell into Saul's hands. The people begged to be allowed to keep the king as a trophy, and the best of the animals as material for a great sacrifice to God. They wished to have a great service, in which their own honour as well as God's honour might be magnified. Agag should grace the triumph of the king, and the fine cattle that of the princes and elders. Why not? Saul does not seem to have seen that in giving way he was doing anything wrong. Surely, as long as all were sacrificed in the end, the commandment would be obeyed. This only shewed that he did not know the character of true obedience. Obedience is placing yourself and your service absolutely at the will of your Sovereign Lord, and carrying out His commandments to the letter. When Samuel arrived, and Saul went to meet him to accept his congratulations, the prophet asked him if he had obeyed. What about

the cattle? What about Agag? The whole Divine purpose of the battle was spoiled. Through Saul's sin the battle was robbed of its religious character. It was just like any other; whereas it was intended as an act of judgment, like a cyclone, an earthquake, which fulfils its purpose and vanishes. There was not to be a hoof left behind. Men were to be startled, and ask, What hath God wrought! Now Saul had spoiled all this by his inability to recognize that he was only an instrument in God's hands, that he was not to appear in the matter at all save as the executive of another. His sin was that of the disobedient prophet, only more glaring. In that case, the prophet was told to go and do a great thing and then vanish. He was to be merely the mouthpiece of God. But he was not able to resist the temptation of talking about it to his brother prophet. He could not be content with being merely a cipher, and hearkened greedily to the excuse the old prophet made for taking him indoors for refreshment.

The punishment in both cases seems to us to be severe. But the ambassador or the commissioned officer must learn to serve the king's interests, not their own; and if they cannot be trusted, they must be dismissed. The higher the office, the more serious the responsibility and the heavier the judgment. No religious acts, however sacred, can atone for disloyalty. Until God's servant has learnt that he is

nothing in His sight, he cannot be used for the highest purposes.

And so all the splendid promise of the early part of Saul's reign fades away. No man had better chances. In the eyes of the world he was the child of fortune. Going to seek his father's asses, he found a kingdom; and every possible help in signs, prophetic intimations, circumstances, was given him. If personality is bound up with having suitable opportunities for its growth and development, then Saul ought to have been one of the great characters of history. But he is nothing of the kind. All is wrecked by his failure to learn obedience. The strange thing happens that we have spoken of in a previous chapter. Saul, instead of growing in personality, loses it. He has dark, gloomy periods in which he is not himself. Disappointment and failure confuse his mind. He has lost the thread of God's will, and so cannot clearly find his own. The world, instead of being the revelation of personal love, becomes an insoluble enigma. He can make nothing of it. God seems to have become his enemy instead of his friend. Everything is wrong. His old courage deserts him; for days Goliath openly flaunts him. His power of sovereignty deserts him. His closest friends become his enemies, and his enemies his friends. Darkness settles over his reason and his life. He loses himself because he has lost God.

It is a relief to turn from the darkness of Saul's

character to the glory of David's. David is one of the surprises of the Old Testament. No one ever expected anything of him ; no one thought that he was likely to be Israel's greatest king. The youngest son of an undistinguished family, set to the inglorious task of shepherding—usually allotted to the slaves, females, or despised of the family—known chiefly as a dreamy lad, quite unfit for practical service, he was no more likely than Jacob to be a leader of men. Samuel can hardly believe that this stripling, called hastily from his flocks, is to be the Anointed of the Lord. And David himself never got over it. That he, a shepherd boy, should be placed on the throne of a mighty empire, that he should be the Anointed—the Messiah Prince, type of a Greater to come—anointed by Samuel of God, seemed an impossible dream. And yet, here again, the unexpected happens. David, with all his disadvantages, soon outstrips Saul. And the one characteristic which shines out so clearly in his character is his obedience. He has absolute trust in the will of God, and wherever it points he goes. It leads him into desperate adventures ; but the more desperate they are, the more confirmed he becomes in his confidence that no harm can ever come of obedience. It is God's will that he should protect his father's flock ; and in spite of attacks by both lion and bear, he does so. It is God's will that he should champion his own people against Goliath ; and though the odds are all against him, he goes

forth with confidence, with but a sling and a few stones in his hand. It is God's will that he should marry Michal, Saul's daughter; and though ten thousand Philistines stand in the way, he will win her. In all the hair-breadth escapes of these trying years in the wilderness, when he was hunted as a partridge, he never hesitates in obedience to God's will. Directly he is assured that God wishes him to do a thing, he does it.

But not only this: he shews his love of obedience in even stronger ways. Not only will he follow God's will where it points, but he will not move till it does point. The most tempting proposals cannot shake his loyalty. For some years his life has been a torture; he wanders from place to place, with a price set on his head. At last he has the opportunity to end it. His enemy lies at his mercy; his friends urge him to strike. Is not the land in confusion through the King's madness? Has he not murdered the priests of the Lord? Has not God given David this golden opportunity? There is every motive for striking but one; and that is, it is not God's will. He can wait, or, if necessary, he can die; but he cannot be disloyal to the will of God. And in his after life, saddened by grievous sins, this loyalty does not desert him.

In the most terrible crisis of his life, when he has to flee the capital to escape the wrath of his son Absalom, he still submits to whatever may

be the Divine will. "If I shall find favour in the eyes of the Lord, He will bring me again, and shew me both it, and His habitation : but if He say thus, I have no delight in thee ; behold, here am I, let Him do to me as seemeth good unto Him."* So, too, when Shimei goes along the road cursing and casting stones at the King, David refuses to allow him to be touched. "Let him alone, let him curse ; for the Lord hath bidden him. It may be that the Lord will look on the wrong done unto me, and that the Lord will requite me good for his cursing."†

It was this obedience that placed him on high. It is true that he was born a King of Israel by his natural gifts ; true, also, that there was a grace and charm about him which entwined the affections of the nation round his person and memory ; but the gift that secured him such friends and such whole-hearted affection was the sympathy that never demanded what was unreasonable, the sympathy that is born out of a hard experience of trying situations, that is the child of obedience. He was Israel's greatest king because he was Israel's best servant. He was the man after God's own heart because he was the man who knew and loved God's will. S. Paul, in his sermon at Antioch, sums up his life very well in these short words, "He served the counsel of God."

And it is just this that has made all the great men. "It has ever been held the highest wis-

* 2 Sam. xv. 25. † 2 Sam. xvi. 11, 12.

dom," writes Carlyle, "for a man not merely to submit to necessity—necessity will make him submit—but to know and believe well that the stern thing which necessity had ordered was the wisest—the best—the thing wanted then. . . . A man is right and invincible, virtuous and on the road towards sure conquest, precisely while he joins himself to that great Law of the world in spite of all superficial laws, temporary appearances, profit and loss calculations; he is victorious while he co-operates with that great central Law, not victorious otherwise; and surely his first chance of co-operating with it and getting into the course of it, is to know with his whole soul that it *is*, that it is good and alone good."

So, too, Mr. Gladstone, in a letter which his biographer tells us sets out the great work of religion as he conceived it, writes:—

"There is a beautiful little sentence in the works of Charles Lamb concerning one who had been afflicted. 'He gave his heart to the Purifier, and his will to the Sovereign Will of the Universe.' But there is a speech in the third canto of the 'Paradiso,' spoken by a certain Piccardo, which is a rare gem. I will only quote one line:—

'In His Will is our peace. To this all things
By Him created, or by Nature made,
As to a central Sea, self-motion brings.'

The words are few and simple, and yet they appear to me to have an inexpressible majesty of truth about them, to be almost as if they were

spoken by the very mouth of God. It so happened (unless my memory deceives me) I first read that speech on a morning early in the year 1836 which was one of trial. I was profoundly impressed and powerfully sustained, almost absorbed by their words. They cannot be too deeply engraven upon the heart. In short, what we all want is that they should not come to us as an admonition from without, but as an instinct from within. . . . The first state which we are to contemplate with hope and to seek by discipline is that in which our will should be one with the will of God ; not merely shall submit to it, not merely follow after it, but live and move with it, even as the pulse of the blood in the extremities acts with the central movement of the heart."

CHAPTER VIII.

PERSONALITY AND SELF-ASSERTION.

SIMON PETER AND SIMON MAGUS.

WE have seen that, highly advantageous as natural gifts are to the personality to whom they belong, yet they do not of themselves make personality. They draw attention to it, commend it, but they do not strengthen or deepen it. Indeed, as with Esau, they may have the contrary effect, and lead the gifted person to feel he is self-sufficient. How many have been blinded by the popularity which their beauty and gracious manner have created, and supposed they were something when they were nothing. And there is the greater danger of confusing gifts with personality when they seem to be inherent in it. Gifts like beauty and physical strength wither away; but shrewdness, wit, cunning, worldly wisdom stay to the last, and those who possess them almost persuade themselves that what has been so effective here will be effective elsewhere. They respond very readily to the invitation to become personalities. They are already, in their own judgment, per-

sonalities of some consequence, and need no urging to press forward to that sphere where their personality will impress and command. And the path which the world recommends is that of push, determination, self-assertion. "You can only become yourself," it says, "if you come out of your retirement and set yourself forward. You must make opportunities if you cannot find them. Life is short, and, unless you are resolute and quick, your chance will be gone. And with this eagerness to be first, there must be combined a shrewd knowledge of the world you seek to influence. You must know the ways and weaknesses of men; you must be quick to discern when to strike and when to withhold; and further, you must take care to let yourself be known. It is true, good wine needs no bush, but if you don't believe in yourself no one else will."

Self-assertion, self-advertisement, and knowledge of the world are the three great principles that command success. And it is not only in the secular, but also in the religious world that they are repeatedly being tried. The spiritual kingdom offers more tempting and more conspicuous advantages than the kingdom of the world; and never were there greater opportunities for self-advertisement than are presented to-day. The Press gives peculiar facilities; sermons and preachers are advertized widely. The minister's name grows larger and larger as his success becomes more and more assured;

his personality begins to be measured by the size of the letters which express his name; and the name is helped by the photograph in the window and the paragraph in the local gazette.

Not that this is peculiar to the religious world. It is widely current in every department of human life, and it only attracts the more attention because it is the more unexpected. The Gospel conception of work suggests a quiet, unobtrusive manifestation of the Truth, after His example of Whom it was said, "He shall not strive nor cry aloud, neither shall anyone hear His voice in the streets"; a distrust of crowds, retirement in the face of popularity, and the like. It turned the world upside down, but it did so by its own inherent force, not by worldly attempts to win popular favour. The modern aspect of much of our religious life is widely different. The human instrument is brought into great prominence; the King is lost in the exaltation of His subjects, the Kingdom in that of a struggling organization. There are many, however, who will assert that it is justified by results. They point out so and so, who was nobody till he came to town. His church officers made him. They drew him out, called public attention to him, wrote him up, persuaded crowds to come and hear him. And now, they say, he is an admitted power. "All, from the least to the greatest, give heed to him, saying, 'This man is the great power of God.'"

So the public of Samaria spoke of Simon Magus. Perhaps there is no better illustration of these principles that the world recommends than the very brief record we have of the great magician. It is true that he was a religious mountebank, a conscious deceiver, but this does not make his career less fruitful as an exposition of the weakness of the principles recommended. He had large knowledge of the world, knew the weaknesses of men and women and how to use them. He had doubtless acquired a certain familiarity with what were then known as the dark arts, and was enabled by it to give his audiences some idea of his greatness. He advertized widely, "giving out that himself was some great one," and attracted increasingly large crowds to his addresses and exhibitions. He was not content with posing as a mere juggler, but wished to be recognized as the "great power of God," the divinely-appointed instrument of salvation, the one person who could give clear manifestations of the powers of the world to come. His success was astonishing. Samaria was taken by storm. The leading officials of the place, as well as the ignorant poor, alike acclaimed him as Divine Power.

In the flush of success, S. Philip arrived. At first he would find but few who would listen to him ; but the reality and power of his message, testified to by signs far more remarkable than any Simon had done, produced a great change. The old leader, seeing his in-

fluence beginning to wane, at once professed the greatest interest in the new movement, threw himself into it, was baptized, and joined Philip ; hoping, no doubt, to learn the secret of his success. The Apostolic mission which followed brought about still more remarkable results ; and Simon, who was growing impatient at being left behind, offers to purchase the secret of their power.

It was characteristic of the man that money was the measure of power. All could be bought with it. It is then that S. Peter forces home upon him the emptiness and the sinfulness of his life. There was something bad at the very core, and until he got rid of that, there was no hope of anything but judgment and destruction. Tradition tells us that he left the district and went to Rome, where S. Peter again found him at his old work, unconverted and hardened. He is an extreme case, reappearing now and again in such men as Harris (who had such a strange influence over Laurence Oliphant), Brigham Young, and Dowie, in the religious world ; in such women as Madame Humbert, in the secular world. But the principles he stands for are common enough everywhere ; and it is well that we should realize that, however successful they may appear to be for a time, they do not really make personalities, they do not really move the world. For a time, like some rocket, they blaze in the world's firmament, but in the end they fall to the earth and are buried amongst its rubbish.

Very different indeed is the way we are now about to point out. No sharper contrast could be drawn than that between the fisherman, Simon Peter, and the magician, Simon Magus. In the one case, you have simplicity, scant knowledge of the world, and blunt directness; in the other, you have cunning, a wide knowledge of human nature, and hypocrisy. In the one case, you have a man who depreciates himself, loves quiet, and knows God; in the other, one who praises himself, pushes forward, and knows the world.

Had the two men been standing together, the world would not have hesitated as to which man they would promise influence and success. And yet it is not Simon Magus, but Simon Peter, that "catches men." It is he who becomes one of the great figures of history, whose name is known wherever the Christian faith has penetrated, whose letters are still commented upon and preached about throughout the civilized world. Whilst the one remains Simon the Magician, owing his celebrity to a Galilean fisherman, the other is always Simon the Rock. And it is because his life emphasizes the very opposite methods to those the world recommends: instead of self-assertion, dependence on God; instead of self-advertisement, self-effacement; instead of knowledge of the world, the knowledge of self.

It was these characteristics in the humble fisherman that led our Lord at the very outset

to predict such great things of him. He said, "Thou art Simon"—Simon, as the word indicates, the hearer, the man so quick to receive impressions, so easily moulded—"but thou shalt be called Peter, the Rock, whom no one will be able to move, the firm, strong resting-place for those who are perishing in the rough waters of life." Christ saw this great future in the quick, impulsive man who stood before Him, because He saw at the root of his character that which always makes a sure foundation, namely, penitence. As Mr. Illingworth says: "Penitence places our entire personality, with its triple functions of reason, feeling, and will, in a right relation to God, and is, therefore, the necessary foundation of Christian character." So, too, our modern poet makes self-knowledge one of three elements of power:

"Self-knowledge, self-reverence, self-control,
These three alone lead to sovereign power."

The self-knowledge that leads to self-humiliation and self-abasement; not that superficial knowledge which confesses to mistakes and failures, which rather enjoys talking about infirmities and weaknesses, since they serve to cover up the real mischief. The self-knowledge of penitence is very different from that fit of low spirits which comes to us when we are overtaken in a fault. It is the revelation that we have wronged our neighbour and our God, and that without an open repentance we are wholly unfit for God's service.

It was this that led Simon, so we believe, to make that open confession of sin, and with his brother Andrew to enter the waters of Jordan to be baptized by John; and it was this self-knowledge that led him to welcome his brother's news that he had found the Messiah. For he had through his old master already learnt that the Messiah was "the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world," and it was from sin that he longed to be free. So he went, timid and shrinking, no doubt, to that first interview with Him whom his soul desired. It is likely that in his self-humiliation he had supposed that the searching eye of Christ would find more and more of sin, and that, whilst he might receive pardon, he would certainly feel fresh humiliation. And yet there is not a word of reproach. The very contrary: instead of abasement, exaltation; instead of self-contempt, self-respect; instead of what he is, what he will be. "*Thou art Simon; thou shall be called Peter.*"

A word of hope, of praise, from a great and good man is one of the most precious gifts a man can receive; but such a word from Christ, Who sees through a man completely, Who has an infinitely higher standard of life, is a wonderful joy. Simon, no doubt, went away wondering what the Master had seen in him that led him to make such a gracious promise, that he, Simon, should become Peter. But that change was not to take place in a day. He had

to learn more about himself from Christ than he had ever learned from the Baptist. So far, he knew himself to be wrong because he had done wrong things; he was to learn that he was wrong because in the light of holiness all was wrong. Self-examination had taught him something, but the revelation of Christ was to take him further, even right down to the very roots of his being. Penitence is something more than the confession of sins; it is the realization that sin makes relationship with God impossible. And for the good man this is torture. It is this that Simon now learns. He had not got down into the lowest depths. He must be alone for a little longer yet. No doubt, during that time of enforced absence from Christ, he had been thinking more about Peter than Simon, more about the great future than the poor past. Now Christ reveals Himself again. He reveals Himself in His sermon to the crowd, in His personal kindness to the disciple, in the startling miracle of the unexpected catch of fish; and then there flashes across Simon's soul what he had not perceived before: and that, not merely his sins, but his sinfulness; not merely signs of ill-health, but the presence of disease. He is like a man who has just been told that he has some horrible contagious disease, and in horror repels the embrace of his wife; or like a doctor who suddenly realizes that he is infectious, his house is infectious, all about him infectious, and im-

plores his daughter to flee his home. S. Peter feels his words, actions, manner, nay, his presence will defile this all holy Person Who is in the boat with him. He must be left, left alone, in complete solitude, lest he harm anyone. "*Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord.*"

But when, thus dejected and in despair, he crouches down in the boat at the feet of Christ, he hears the same encouraging note that he heard three months ago, "*Fear not: from henceforth thou shalt catch men.*" Our Lord does not tell him that he has exaggerated things, that sin has not this terrible effect, but lifts him out of the present into the future. "From henceforth, from this moment, now that you have realized what sin is, you are in a position to catch men." His language seems to imply that he has just learned what will make him influential. Self-knowledge was followed by self-reverence.

It might have seemed as though Simon had now learned all that was to be known about himself, that there was nothing further to be discovered. It is possible that the wonderful promises Christ made to him about his future position in the Church had blurred that image of himself he had seen in the boat. He is again eager, self-confident, boastful. He has not yet realized how deceitful the heart is, how uncertain as an indication of real strength the feelings are. So the Master allows him to be

tempted, and in an instant he is overthrown. He who had made such loud professions of loyalty even to death, is found publicly confessing that the Lord, Who has given him everything, is nothing to him—a stranger Whom he does not know. It was as though a man, after three short years of blissful marriage, were to pass his wife unnoticed in the public street because her goodness had made her unpopular; as though a man whom his country has made and honoured were to suddenly apostatize, and in the face of enemies to proclaim himself an alien.

Simon again sees himself—a mass of cowardice, treachery, deceit, utterly untrustworthy, wholly unreliable; and it seemed as though there was no opportunity to make up for the past, that it was irrevocable. The death of Christ seemed to close all. Six weeks pass by; and again, in clearer terms still, the old encouragement: "Feed My sheep"; "Tend My sheep"; "Feed My lambs."

The world may well wonder how the great Leader of men is going to make anything of a character so unstable as this. She could cherish hopes of Simon Magus with his persistent optimism, his determined will, and his clever jugglery; but this poor fisherman, again and again hopelessly plunging deeper and deeper into the mire of sin, what can be made of him? And yet, whilst the one is nothing but Simon the Sorcerer, the other is Simon the Rock.

This man, of whom nothing could be said with much certainty except that he was a penitent, becomes one of the great imperishable names of history. We are surprised till we realize that self-knowledge is the only gate to self-development. So long as a man is out there, he is not likely to be in anywhere. It may come first, as with Simon, by self-questioning, followed by a revelation of eternal goodness and crowned by a bitter experience; but, however it comes, we may rest assured there is no progress without it. "Our growth depends on our continuance in penitence; and the growth will only go forward according to the measure with which our growing penitence admits of it."

We do not know ourselves in success, nor do we become ourselves when the world is heaping flatteries upon us. Like empty looking-glasses, we then reflect the image that is thrown upon us; but it is not the image of God, it is the false face of the world.

The man, then, who is seeking to win his soul will not shrink from the purifying discipline of penitence—will not be impatient with the hours spent in examining an apparently shapeless, hideous form trying to express itself. In that form lies the Divine Image, which will one day be separated from all that defiles and manifested in its own beauty. We must believe in that, for self-knowledge must be accompanied by self-reverence. The self seems hopeless, but its possibilities are boundless. In itself it has no

future, but in Christ it commands the world: from one point of view, fortunate if it does no harm; from the other point of view, disappointing if it does not do infinite good. So believing, the man who has seen himself in God becomes at once the most hopeful and sanguine of men. If Christ is going to do so much through him, what will he not do through others? If *he* is to catch men, what infinite possibilities belong to others. He, therefore, believes in men before they believe in themselves. He becomes their natural leader, for he is the great apostle of hope. And hope, as Bishop Creighton reminds us, "is the supreme quality of a leader, the great source of inspiration which he can communicate to others. Without it, all other qualities are comparatively inoperative. This has always been so, at all times and in all matters—in warfare, in politics. He has led the best—not who has been the most dexterous, still less he who was wisest—but he who could most readily communicate the hope which burned in his own bosom."

Hope, however, has its dangers. Self-reverence may so easily pass, as it did with S. Peter, into self-conceit. It needs the firm hand to keep it in its place. The tendency of hope is towards self-assurance. "It is the defect of hopefulness to make schemes of its own and to be wedded to them, to err through self-reliance and blunder, through excess of

**Mind of S. Peter*, p. 5.

courage." We must, therefore, never forget the picture of what we have seen, in our hope of what we shall see. There is the old man still to be crucified and put to death before the new man can arise in his full glory. The poet was wise in placing self-control after self-reverence. We are only safe in respecting ourselves when we have our hand on the reins, or, rather, when we have given the reins to someone else. The last words of Christ to S. Peter are the best comment on this: "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdest thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thine hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not."

Gradually, as life goes on, we are glad to put the reins into other hands; and as we grow used to that gentle Hand, find instinctively that we were never so happy as when He was driving, never so truly ourselves as when He was gently taking us His way. We find S. Peter in his later years "no longer living in his own plans, pursuing his own expectations, and turning everything that happens into frank agreement with his preconceptions, but seeing before him the eternal purpose of God"; and his experience is ours.

Such is S. Peter's life story; the pages marked with tear stains, but every page growing clearer than the last. And it is only one of

many that preach the same lesson. The great leaders have been the great penitents. S. Paul, Augustine, Luther, Wesley, Pusey are only a few out of many who have through penitence not only won their own souls, but the souls of others. Through a long conflict with a rebellious self they have been purified, and exercised in an ever-increasing fulness of personality the widest influence.

CHAPTER IX.

PERSONALITY AND KNOWLEDGE.

S. PAUL AND SENECA.

PERSONALITY developed in relationship, purified by penitence, and deepened by silence, so far we have seen. But what aim determines its progress, what principle directs its course? It may be and is doubtless often said, that it requires no further plan than that which is set in its growth—that, like the plant or tree, like the bird or animal, man attains his goal by growing. What is chiefly necessary, then, is some expansive power like that which a man finds in relationship, but of a wider character. This expansive power is found in knowledge. Every realm man conquers means so much self-development; and some are inclined to label the particular effect that the study of science, art, or the classics has upon the character, in making it accurate, sympathetic, broad, or deep.

Moreover, the very word “education”—*i.e.*, the “leading forth” of the soul—is supposed to refer to the kind of work that real knowledge

does in drawing out the self from the environment in which it is entangled, to a freer and more independent attitude. Ignorance is supposed to be a worse foe to real progress than heredity; and it is always a surprise which needs accounting for when someone who has had but little knowledge becomes a great personality. "Whence has this man this knowledge, never having learned?"

And it is no doubt true that knowledge does make a man fuller, broader, and more interesting, as ignorance limits and fetters him. Through real knowledge, whether of nature, science, or art, a man is carried out of himself, feels a relationship with a wider world, expands and becomes more of a personal force. And we should expect this to be the case; for there is no separation between religious and secular knowledge. All knowledge is really religious. History, or the knowledge of what man and human society have done in the past, is a knowledge of the guiding Hand of the Spirit; Geography, or the knowledge of the earth and its environment, is a knowledge of that which God made, and is in relation to Him Who made it, what the knowledge of the watch is to the watchmaker, of the beautiful cabinet to the carpenter; Fiction and Poetry, or the knowledge of human nature, is the knowledge of the image of God in its various aspects. So, of course, all knowledge is stimulating and expansive in its effects, as being

indirectly a kind of knowledge of Him ; but if it always remains impersonal, if it never awakens a direct knowledge of Him Who gives it its chief interest, it has little or no ethical effect : it satisfies curiosity, gives the self wider attachments, but fails to kindle the great motive of human action—personal love. It is the difference between the knowledge of a man's gardens or his museum, in themselves, and the knowledge of them in relation to a dearly-loved friend.

Such knowledge may give an ideal of life ; but not an ideal that can be absolutely depended upon, nor an ideal that gives life. And when such an ideal as the mind forms, comes into contact with a will that loves ease, pleasure, and society, it fails to produce an effect ; and then we have fatal inconsistency, the belief in high ideals belied by the life. It is this that is so remarkably seen in the life of Seneca. There is a reach out to knowledge, knowledge of every kind, and there is an attainment of a very lofty ideal ; but to a large extent it remains theory, which the philosopher hesitates to recommend because he has never found it personally effective. It is true, but not true for earth ; and for man, but not man as we find him. But we shall see this better if we glance at his life.

Lucius Annæus Seneca, born about seven years before the Christian era, was a man exceptionally fortunate in the character and cir-

cumstances of his parents. Though his father was no genius, yet he was intelligent, and, with his gifted wife, sufficiently popular to attract to his house the best people in Rome. His mother was a "matron of the best Roman type—strong, self-denying, proud of her motherhood, and despising the extravagance and ostentation of her class."* She was devoted to her sons: treated them with liberal generosity, shared their tastes and interests, and, in an age of immodesty, kept her soul clean and pure. The home, then, was a place where knowledge of a wide and lofty character would meet with sympathy. Lucius had this further advantage: he suffered much from ill-health in his early years, and was therefore led to take a more serious view of things than would otherwise have been the case, and to desire to probe those mysteries of pain which overshadowed his life's beginning.

From all we learn about his boyhood and early manhood, it would seem that he was an eager student, and passed from tutors to the wider school of philosophy with an appetite that few teachers could satisfy. For a time, under the influence of Sotion, the Pythagorean, he gave up meat and became a vegetarian; and later wished to embrace a life of poverty, that he might the better realize the sufferings of the poor. And that his knowledge might have practical results, he daily

* *Roman Society from Nero to Marcus Aurelius*.—Dill, p. 329.

examined himself, asking where and how he had failed. In any age he would have been distinguished, but in that period of intellectual and moral poverty he came to the front very quickly, and soon held positions in which the influence of his knowledge could be of weight. In the Senate, where his eloquence excited even the Emperor's envy, and in the Court, where his attractions led to his banishment, it is plain that he had opportunities only granted to the few. These were indefinitely extended when he became Nero's tutor.

Perhaps no more striking testimony to his ineffectiveness could be found than the character of Nero. It may be said that no one could have trained him, that the instincts for evil were so strong that even the best teachers would have failed. And yet an equally difficult task was fulfilled with marked success by Fénelon. His pupil, the young Duke of Burgundy, was a boy whose character, we are told, made people tremble. He was so passionate that he would break the clocks when they struck the hours which summoned him to his lessons, and would fly into a rage with anyone who hindered a pleasure. Resistance made him perfectly furious, and a strong inclination attracted him to whatever was forbidden to body or mind. In disposition he was cruel, and so proud that he looked upon the rest of the world as an inferior race.* Here were all the

* See *Men of Might*, pp. 124, 125.

elements for a future Nero, but through the influence of Fénelon he became an altogether new being. From the time of his first communion to the end of his life, the Duke never failed to communicate once a fortnight.

Such is the difference between the training in secular and religious knowledge. But we are anticipating. From being the Emperor's tutor, Seneca rose to the position of Prime Minister. For a time, especially during the first five years of his rule, his influence told; but it soon weakened, and when he died, he left behind teaching that will always place him amongst the first of moral teachers, but a life that in many respects was strangely inconsistent with it. As Mr. Dill, in his sympathetic criticism of the philosopher-director, as he calls Seneca, writes: "He had passionately adopted an ethical creed which aimed at a radical reform of human nature, at the triumph of cultivated and moralized reason and social sympathy over the brutal materialism and selfishness of the age. He had pondered on its doctrines of the higher life, of the nothingness of the things of sense, on death and the indwelling God assisting the struggling soul, on the final happy release from all the sordid misery and terror until every earthly pleasure and ambition faded away in the presence of a glorious moral ideal; and yet this pagan monk, this idealist who would have been at home with S. Jerome or Thomas à Kempis,

had accumulated a vast fortune, and lived in a palace which excited the envy of Nero. He was suspected of having been the lover of two princesses of the Imperial House. He was charged with having connived at or encouraged the excesses of Nero, and even of having been an accomplice in the murder of Agrippina, or its apologist. Some of these rumours are probably false; . . . yet there are traces in Seneca's writings that he had not passed unscathed through the terrible ordeal to which character was exposed in that age. There are pictures of voluptuous ease and jaded satiety which may be the work of a keen, sympathetic observation, but which may also be the expression of repentant memory. In any case, he had sounded the very depths of the moral abysses of his time."*

Such is the result of the latest and most sympathetic study of his character; and it is more than borne out by the contrast which some of his own statements present to his life. What could be more clear than this expression of his belief in God's presence everywhere and at all times, "God is near you, with you, and within you"; and yet the man who wrote these words, of his own will shattered the temple of his body, and rushed unbidden into the Divine presence. Or, again, when he preaches on sin and holiness, urging not only that there is no one without sin, but that no

* *Roman Society from Nero to Marcus Aurelius*.—Dill, p. 297.

good mind is holy without God, we feel that we are listening to a preacher who knew man's weakness and God's holiness; and yet it would seem that he justified, if he did not commend, his pupils' immorality. Again, he shewed the beauty of devotion to others, and taught that on it depended true self-development—"You must live for another if you would live for yourself"—and yet he praised Nero's murder of his mother, the person who had been his chief benefactor. Again, his knowledge of truth, his high position, and his wide acquaintance in the highest circles in Rome led to his being a sort of father confessor to the Roman world of fashion; but to one who wrote to him for directions as to leading a higher life, all he could say was: "I also desire that, but I dare not hope it. I am preoccupied with vices. All I require of myself is not to be equal to the best, but only to be better than the bad."

The truth is, Seneca's gospel, as Mr. Dill points out, "with all its searching power, seems wanting in some of the essentials of an effective religion which can work on character. The reforming force was looked for in the Divine reason which indwells every human soul. It was supposed that if this were given fair play, it would naturally gravitate to the Divine world from which it sprang." It is very much the same as the doctrine of Emerson and other gifted modern teachers, and springs from a faith in the capacities of the soul and the power

of knowledge to develop them, which the history of morals does not justify. It is not only weak and ineffective in itself, but it is essentially a gospel for the few who are sufficiently educated to understand it. "Seneca's gospel," we are told, "was for a limited class. In spite of his professed democratic sympathies, he had no help to offer to the millions of poor, degraded slaves that were scattered through the Empire." But a gospel that is to reach the personality of everyone, whether that of the philosopher or the barbarian, the wealthy or the poor, the man of leisure or the hardworking slave, must be something different from that which Seneca knew.

Knowledge, even if religious, that is, embracing the thoughts of another sphere beyond our own; even if highly moral, that is, finding its highest successes in the realm of ethics, cannot save a man from a sense of weakness; nay, rather emphasizes it. What is wanted is an ideal life, not theoretical and abstract, not confined to the future, but practical and present and, if possible, capable of self-impartation. It is this that the world has found in Jesus Christ, a Person Who unifies all knowledge, and Who also presents in Himself not only an ideal example universally recognized, but an example capable of being communicated.

The **best proof** of this is found in the life of S. Paul. In almost every particular—birth, position, opportunities—Saul the Pharisee offers

a remarkable contrast to Seneca. We have no reason to suppose that his parents were in any way distinguished, in spite of his birth as a Roman citizen; nor is there any good ground for believing that they were conspicuous for culture or refinement. The Scripture emphasizes none of these things, but only this, that his father was a Pharisee, and therefore fanatically devoted to the minute regulations of the law, and hostile to anything that savoured of foreign learning and custom. Tarsus was a university city of high rank, but Saul's relations with it were probably more those of a bigoted Romanist in Oxford than those of a sympathetic student. From the chance quotations from heathen writers found in his speeches or epistles, there is nothing to shew that he was a scholar or devoted student, as some have supposed. His whole attitude towards heathen literature in those early days was probably one of contempt. Even in after years, when his mind became capable of the widest sympathies, he warned his converts lest anyone should make spoil of them through their philosophy and vain deceit, and was certain that the so-called wisdom of the wise would be destroyed. His one interest—and in this he followed his father—was religious rather than secular knowledge; and he passed with joy and keen expectation from Tarsus to Jerusalem, from his heathen surroundings to the atmosphere of the sacred city, from such Gentile masters as he may

have been obliged to attend, to Gamaliel the Jewish Rabbi. He became a devotee of the law in all its parts, a fanatical enthusiast for all that was Jewish.

And yet out of this narrow and intolerant school came the great Apostle. It was not the knowledge of the law that wrought the great change. Seneca's knowledge would have done more for Seneca than the law for S. Paul, had not that law been centred in a living Person Whom he came to adore and love with a passionate devotion. It was when Christ came across his path on the way to Damascus and opened his eyes, that all life was changed. Then, the most narrow-minded of men became all things to all men that he might save some; the man who hated idolatry could yet take a text from an idol's altar as the subject of his sermon; the man who had been the most consistent and earnest foe to heathenism became the heathen's warmest friend; and the man whose intellectual power had never been remarkable became one of the great intellectual forces of the world.

Dean Farrar's estimate, in the following words, is neither exaggerated nor over highly coloured :—" If we look at him only as a writer, how immeasurably does he surpass, in his most casual epistles, the greatest authors, whether Pagan or Christian, of his own succeeding epochs. The younger Pliny was famous as a letter writer, yet the younger Pliny never pro-

duced any letter so exquisite as that to Philemon. Seneca as a moralist stood unrivalled, yet not only is the clay largely mixed with the gold, but even his finest aphorisms are inferior in breadth and intensity to the most casual of S. Paul's. Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius furnish us with the purest and noblest specimens of stoic loftiness of thought, yet S. Paul's chapter on Charity is worth more than all they ever wrote. If we look at the Christian world, the very greatest worker in every realm of Christian service does but present an inferior aspect of one phase of S. Paul's many-sided pre-eminence. No saint of God has ever attained the same heights in so many capacities, or received the gifts of the Spirit in so rich an outpouring, or borne in his body such evident brand-marks of the Lord. In his lifetime he was no whit behind the very chiefest of the apostles, and he towers above the very greatest of all the saints who have since striven to follow the example of his devotion to his Lord."

How is it, we ask? What has worked this miracle? Of Seneca's splendid armoury for making the conquest of the world he has not a single blade. He starts on his return from his lonely vigils in Sinai without friends, without position. The only people he knows look on him as a renegade and hate him with the fiercest animosity—the only people who might become friends regard him with suspicion. All

the powers of position, wealth, philosophy, influence, he was without ; and yet the Roman Statesman and Director of consciences is left far behind by the Pharisee.

Could Seneca have visited the mean and dingy room in Rome where the Apostle lived in the year 61, he would "have seen a Jew with bent body and furrowed countenance, with every appearance of age, weakness, and disease, chained by the arm to a Roman soldier." He would have seen the complete contrast to himself : bondage instead of liberty, suffering instead of ease, weakness instead of power. It would have been impossible for him to believe that that poor prisoner would soon achieve a fame that he would envy ; that his own reputation and the interest the world had in it would, to a large extent, depend on the possible supposition that he once met him ; that the letters written from that mean room would rank as the great treasures of the world. There were no signs there of greatness, of power, except the illuminating look in the saint's eyes. And yet that impossible thing took place : and its secret is the main power to-day, as it has been for centuries, in every department of life.

And if we seek to know what it is, it is not hard to find. The two words, "in Christ," explain everything. Both Saul and Seneca pursued the same object, Divine Truth ; but whilst the latter only caught glimpses of the robe in which it is enwrapped, S. Paul

embraced the living Person Who wore it. Seneca studied such rays of light as fell on his path, but S. Paul was caught up into the very Sun of Righteousness. Seneca studied the effects of the eternal life as he saw them displayed in men and things, but S. Paul had the Life within him. And all this in no vague or imaginative fashion. The Figure of the Living Christ, Who is the Way, the Truth, the Life, stood in his path. He heard His voice, saw His face. And that was not the only time ; but afterwards, in more than one great crisis of his life, the Lord stood by him. He was without him as an objective fact, and within him as an inspiring force. It was natural, then, that a great and surprising change should be the effect of this extraordinary inspiration. When, in writing to his friends, he described the man "in Christ" as a "new creation," he was describing himself. All things became new : the world of nature, the roar of the sea, the sound of the wind in the trees, the colouring of flowers and grasses, the smell of the upturned earth, as well as the wilder aspects—the storm, the fire, and the lightning flash. Nature, that had had but little religious meaning before, became personified, and was regarded as a mother groaning in her travail pangs and filled with a great longing and expectation for the redemption of the children of God ; whilst the men and women—the haughty Roman, the light-hearted Greek, the licentious Asiatic—became transformed, as he

saw that they were the objects of the same wonderful love that he knew himself. That which Seneca dreamed of, S. Paul saw; that which he longed for was present, not as something in some far distant age, but as a living, ever widening and inspiring force. The world without and the world within met and embraced in a loving experience that was unaffected by the storms of life or the anticipation of death. The daimon of Socrates, the universal Divine presence of Seneca, were crystalized, as it were, into a living Form of flesh and blood. And yet this Person, Who was so truly outside as to be heard and touched, was equally truly within, and felt always as life, causing the currents of the blood to move more quickly, the power of thought to be quickened, and the conscience to be flooded with a delightful sense of peace. How this came to be, S. Paul himself could not have told; but he knew by experience that the Ideal was not the offspring of his imagination, but the coming to him, in all his weakness, of a Loving Friend.

It was that knowledge that made S. Paul the effective force he became. It was that personal knowledge, gained in a personal way, that brought life into every part of his work, whether it was gathering sticks, making a tent, or writing a letter—a life that ebbed and flowed as life will, whilst we are in the body, but yet eternal life, ceaseless, unchangeable life, that will find its chief expression and joy in the world to come.

CHAPTER X.

PERSONALITY AND RANK.

PILATE AND DYSMAS.

PERSONALITY enlarged by relationship, purified by penitence, deepened by silence, shaped by consecration, quickened by fellowship with a living Lord, and strengthened by obedience, so far we have seen. We now pass on to that power which more than any other affects it, that which the Scriptures affirm perfects it—namely, suffering. It is not easy in any case to label the effect of any particular virtue on that mysterious inner self which lies in the recesses of our being. And it may well be that our personality is quite differently affected from what we suppose. But there is no question that we are perfected through suffering; for that was the way in which He was perfected. Though He was the Eternal Word, and able to reach the fullest human experience by some other road had He chosen, yet He accepted the path laid down by the Father. The Scripture tells us that there was something specially suitable in this: “It became Him”—*i.e.*, it was in all ways in

accord with the Divine love and dignity—"in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Author of their salvation perfect through sufferings." The fulness of Humanity was to be His through pain. Our Lord refers to this necessity when He speaks of being straitened—*i.e.*, narrowed and limited—till the baptism with which He was to be baptized was accomplished. "And He tells us plainly that the disciple is not above his Master in this respect; that the way of the Cross is his way too; that we, too, only find our true selves by losing them.

"Perfect through sufferings." We dwell on the words because, looked at in this light, suffering is seen to be not an enemy, but a friend; not a grim torturer, but a tried doctor, anxious, by a very careful and sparing use of the knife, to get rid of those things which have prevented the self from getting free and growing. It is like the gracious rain from heaven, which sets the powers of the plant going.

Looked at in this light, we have an adequate justification for pain. No one would be so mad as to risk the loss of a full experience because of pain. And if we desire proof of it, we have it in countless examples—examples, indeed, so many and varied as to make the easy and comfortable anxious lest they should be stagnating through lack of trial. The kingdom of experience would seem to be only open to those who have the courage to suffer loss, to encounter much tribulation.

We think of Dante reaching his deepest thought when he was exiled from the home and friends he loved; of Milton fathoming the depths of heaven and hell when he was blind, friendless, and the object of suspicion and hate; of Bunyan describing the history of a soul's spiritual experience when he was robbed of air, light, and liberty. Indeed, it is difficult to name any great purpose or object that has been accomplished without adversity. As Smiles truly says: "What is it that promotes the truest and the deepest thought in the human race? It is not learning, not the conduct of business, not even the impulse of the affections, it is suffering; and that is perhaps the reason why there is so much suffering in the world."

Pain seems to be a door into the realm of conscious experience. It is true that we often say, when we are passing through it: "I cannot think of anything to-day because I am in such pain." "I hardly know what to do for the pain"; and yet, when it passes away, we are sensitive to a host of impressions that we before ignored. Rest, companionship, the scent of flowers, the pleasure of simple foods, the joy of sleep, all are ours in a new way; we have a new experience of them. And friends, as they watch us after we have come out of the darkness, notice a growth in sympathy and self-control, a larger and more thoughtful view of things. Specially is this the case if we have come very near to the gates that open on the

fair Paradise of the other life ; if we have looked in, as it were, and then been brought back again. The inconveniences and vexations that are so often the staple of conversation are seen in their right proportion ; the gaieties and frivolities which waste so much precious time are felt to be a misuse of the purpose of life ; and the opportunities of self-sacrifice are known to be those which bring most real wealth.

The Bible is so full of illustrations of this thought that it is not easy to select one which will do the subject fullest justice. All those whose lives have been brought before us have been men familiar with pain, and through their pain have acquired power. Jacob, Moses, Samuel, David, S. Paul, what suffering they had ! But they had, also, so many gifts and virtues that the element of pain is not seen to its best advantage. It would be preferable to take a case where gifts, for the most part, are absent, where the nature is rough and undisciplined, where there is but little for the truth to lay hold of ; and then in a moment, as it were, to brand the truth in, through the fire of pain. Those who know but little of the power of pain would say that this were a most hazardous experiment, that nature so tried would be more likely to reject than accept the truth ; and it is true that such an experiment is not always successful. Clergy, who watch the bed of suffering more often than others, are constrained to admit that pain often seems an enemy rather

than a friend to truth, that not a few people become smaller rather than larger under it. Happily, it is not always so; and when due allowance is made for the timidity, hesitation and softness with which the truth is often presented, we may be constrained to admit that **our generalization is wrong.**

In any case, never was the need of pain more clearly seen than in the case of Pilate, nor its advantages more readily seen than in the case of Dysmas, the penitent robber. Both men were soldiers; both, from various reasons, were interested in the Christ; both heard and saw Him; but the one condemned, the other adored Him.

Pilate, during his stay at Jerusalem, must have heard much of the Prophet of Nazareth. His wife knew and thought so much about Him that His Person crossed her mind in dreams, and greatly disquieted her. He had heard men talk of Him and the wonderful works that He did. He doubtless received a careful report of all that happened when Christ entered Jerusalem in procession on Palm Sunday. When, therefore, He was brought before him in the early morning of Good Friday, he felt a strange interest in Him. This was deepened in each successive interview; and yet when He spoke of the Kingdom of Truth, he asked with some annoyance, and perhaps with some contempt, "What is Truth?" He was probably bored by the whole subject. Discussed as it was again

and again by philosophers, astrologers, and the many who professed an interest in such things, he was tired of its vanity, its vagueness, its inability to change any single fact in the day. Had he been in the position of Publius' father, lying sick and ill, near to the borders of death, how different we feel the presence of Christ would have been to him; how different that kingdom of reality, the existence of which he questioned; how eagerly he would have stretched out his hands for some guide who could take him safely over the confines of death.

But, strong in the dignity of his position and in the power of Rome behind him; conscious of his power to do this King of Truth a service if he chose; blinded by the contrast between his own sovereignty, which had no relation to truth, and the powerlessness of Him Whose realm was truth, he felt no concern in it. It was a trouble to think about it; nay, the thought of this Truth was responsible for the tiresome shadows that now and again crossed his mind. And so the man, putting aside the one splendid opportunity that lay before him, becomes less and less a person of any weight or influence. He passes out of history; and none would have remembered him had it not been for the part he played in the great tragedy of the Cross, for the interviews with his prisoner.

It is interesting to think what Pilate might have become had he, like one of his officers,

confessed the Crucified to be the Son of God. What an Easter Day the resurrection morning would have been to him and his wife ! What a tribute of gratitude men of succeeding ages would have paid him : churches in his honour, children named after him, books written about him ! It was a great opportunity, but he missed it, missed it because it awakened no need. And Pilate passes away as a disappointed, broken life. The old legend, that he still haunts one of the Swiss lakes, is only typical of the feeling his memory awakes : a restless shadow ever seeking, but in vain, the opportunity he flung away.

On the other hand, there is the soldier of fortune losing everything in the one stake which he played. He, too, had thought, like Pilate, that the life best worth living lay in the camp and the active affairs of men. Zealous for freedom, he had followed a well-known leader, whose name, it seems, was the same as our Lord's—Jesus Barabbas, *i.e.*, son of the Father. In a small country like that of Palestine it was not likely that he had not known of this other Leader, Who pursued a plan so different from his own, Who preached instead of fought, Who spent His life in blessing the poor instead of outwitting the hated Roman generals. His had been a rough, coarse life,—godless, independent and hard—doubtless fouled by many a deed of violence, though there is one legend that may be true which tells the other way. It

is said that when the Holy Family were travelling they encountered two thieves, who fell upon them and would have ill-treated them, had not one of them interposed and said, "Suffer them, I beseech thee, to go in peace, and I will give thee forty groats and likewise my girdle." For this merciful release and the lodging he provided, the Holy Family were too poor to give any recompense; but S. Mary gave him the following promise: "The Lord God will receive thee to His right hand and grant thee pardon of thy sins." Dysmas, if the story be true, for it is of him that it is told, had to wait many a long year before he received the promised blessing. In many and many a desperate venture he had engaged himself, till at last came the final attempt to overthrow the hated Roman dominion. It ended, as it was bound to do, in disastrous failure, and Dysmas, his leader, Barabbas, and one other, are thrown into prison to await death.

It is now that the Truth will seek to make her entry. By one of those strange coincidences which seldom fail to make an impression, he learns that, by the will of the mob, Barabbas is pardoned and the Lord substituted for him. The Leader Whom he refused to follow during His life he will now follow to His death. Perhaps the very fact that Barabbas was acquitted, and he, who only took a secondary part in the movement, was doomed to suffer death, shook his faith in the old attempt, and

led him to think with sympathy of the new. All helped to make a way for the revelation that should come through pain. And the knowledge that the pain would end in death and not recovery would of itself quicken every sensibility.

To most people death gives no sign as to when he will make his final visit. Up to the last, there is some hope that they may be able to put him off, whilst others are so weakened by the struggle that they are hardly conscious of anything. The condemned criminal, on the other hand, sees death with a clear mind. He knows that on such a day, at such an hour, he will pass out of this sphere of things into another. He is sure that next week or next month he will be elsewhere. Everything will be changed but himself; that remains the same.

Even the most callous are open to impressions at such a time. The day of the great change, when it arrives, must still further quicken every sensibility. Walking to his death in excellent health and with a clear intelligence, a man must see everything with fresh eyes. So Dysmas, when his last day came, walked out of the prison with a feeling of wondering expectation. What would his thoughts be when the night fell, or the next dawn arose? And he must have noticed the Christ with intense interest, for he had heard so much of Him. He saw His unruffled calm in spite of

great bodily exhaustion, heard the strong words of comfort to the weeping daughters of Jerusalem, heard the prayer for His enemies on the scaffold. He had seen strong men in his time, but none so strong as this.

Then came the pain, the beginning of the end. It seemed to forebode fresh pain beyond. It stirred all his thoughts of judgment. What if he left the judgment of Rome to meet the judgment of God! What if the hard, curious gaze of the world, so unfeeling and cruel, were to be exchanged for that of menacing angels! What if the faith his countrymen held was in this case true, that he was on his way to the bar of God! "Condemnation! We indeed justly." These were the words on his lips. Yes, he and his friend were in the same terrible plight. Sin had at last found them out, and judgment was at the door. They were getting their deserts. But not that Other. He had done nothing amiss. He was in pain, and it was noticed that He had taken no steps to avoid its full pressure; but with Him pain was not the expression of wrath—it was not the instrument of an avenging judge—that was clear. His calmness and quiet were, indeed, wonderful. Man did his very worst, but could not ruffle His countenance, over which there was the quiet look of peace. The pain evidently hurt. The body was convulsed now and again, but the mind had all in control. Suffering, then, had some purpose even with One Who was

innocent. That in itself was a revelation. That the innocent should suffer with the guilty and yet not charge God with injustice was a strange truth, very welcome at that time, when the mystery of pain was being felt from within.

And with that truth another forced its way through the path that suffering was making. This pain must lead somewhere. All pain does, that is allowed to do its own work: the pain of labour to the kingdom of truth, the pain of loss to the kingdom of gain, the pain of disappointment to the kingdom of expectation. Pain was never an end in itself, only a means for further progress; and the last struggle then was only a condition of entering some domain. That He was on the way to a kingdom was certain. There was no looking back, no regret, no expression that life was over, that the future was dark and uncertain; no concern for Himself. All His thoughts were for those He was leaving. The future was bright, however much it might be overclouded for a brief space. And of that kingdom He was King.

It is one of the blessings of suffering that it enables the sufferer to penetrate all disguises. The rich and poor who enter the sick man's room are more nearly the same than ever before. Indeed, the poor, if they know some of the secrets of that other world, have more often the entrée. The curate, the faithful, pious servant, who were at a distance but a day or two before,

become people of importance now. Other callers are refused admittance, but *they* are welcomed. And this spirit of discernment into the reality of things, becomes stronger and clearer as the passing shows begin to vanish away and the kingdom of reality to appear. That anyone should have questioned the royalty of Christ because He was without a crown, robes, or throne, would have seemed to this dying man to argue blindness, a lack of insight. He could see what Pilate could not see, because in a few hours Pilate and his power would be part of the world of shadows which he was leaving behind. Kingship lay in character, and His had all the royal marks about it.

And as it revealed the Christ, so pain revealed the man to himself. He saw his right place in the outer hall of Divine judgment, scourged for his sins; he saw, too, the infinite distance between himself and the Christ, bridged somehow by love. That he might not be forgotten, but when the scourging time was over have some place in that blessed kingdom of peace, was his humble prayer. And, oh! the joy to know, from the only words Christ spoke to him, that that very day before the sun set he would be at peace, resting with this gallant royal Leader beneath the shades of some tree of life, by the cool streams that issue from the throne of God.

We see, then, how much pain does in the

development of the soul, how much it did for that rough soldier, as we know how much it has done for thousands of others. Can we suppose that, had he been standing in the crowd that saw the sad procession marching to Calvary, he would have won that signal blessing? Is it not only too likely that he might have joined in the jeer and jibe, and ridiculed the notion that their Christ was to be a suffering Messiah? But through the pain, in a very brief moment, he passed to the heights of faith, and from the cross he preached not only to his companion and those standing by, but to thousands, we may say millions, who have taken heart by his short sermon, to forsake sin and believe in the Crucified Christ. He earns the proud distinction of being the first of the noble army of confessors. Where were the disciples? Where were the friends, or the many who had been healed? Where were they? Of all around the cross this voice alone is heard openly asserting "This Man hath done nothing amiss," openly praying to Him as his spiritual King. How great he became. It is his personality, not Pilate's, that vibrates through the ages; his example, not Pilate's, that is continually being lifted up for the men and women of civilized Europe to follow. He, in a short, fulfilled a long time. To some, this rapid journey from indifference to faith, from outlawry to fellowship with the good God, has seemed impious. Such forget that God's desire is to

save, and not to destroy ; and when anyone comes to himself first, and then to the Lord, no matter how twisted and deformed his own inner life may be, he has, having taken those two preliminary steps, the opportunity for making a great character, and all eternity to make it in. He had much to learn when he reached his rest, much to acquire ; but when once the seed has begun to sprout, souls ripen quickly in that sunny Paradise where there are no cold winds or cruel frosts to kill.

CHAPTER XI.

PERSONALITY AND GIFTS.

SAMSON AND THE BAPTIST.

“THE government of one’s self is the only true freedom for the individual”; this we have seen so far as it relates to the control of the spirit. There is, however, such a large, and we might almost say increasing number of men whose freedom is hindered by the indulgence of bodily passion, that it is necessary to say something further as to the importance of the mastery over the flesh, if we are to become truly ourselves. In all ages there has been an effort to dissociate spiritual freedom from what we may call temperance. Directly the self knows its liberty, it begins to be impatient of any restraint. “All things are lawful to me,” it cries, in the rush of that sense of freedom which belongs to the children of God. It finds no room for abstinences, fasts, or self-discipline. Such are the characteristics of a gloomy cloistered religion, and are alien to the growing life of one who knows his Saviour and rejoices in His life. Indeed, so

strongly has this been felt, that a doctrine has been framed to meet the excesses of fleshly indulgence. The body, it is represented, is only the house in which the spirit moves, and its indulgences can in no way affect the purity of the soul that, like a bird, flies to and fro within its cage, in no way responsible for or affected by the dirt and rust that has gathered about its prison.

And so the history of religion has seen many examples of those who, from the very fact that they have emphasized the doctrine of self-development, have been led to assert a freedom that has meant license, a license that has ended in self-destruction. They forget that "the self which we seek to develop is, here and now, a sinful self, and incapable, therefore, till its sin is overcome, of any true development at all. Its so-called development is really self-indulgence, and must lead to that progressive deterioration of character which self-indulgence involves. It is not progress, but retrogression, however speciously disguised, and inevitably withdraws us from that union with God which we have seen to be the condition of all real life. The awful epilogue of Greek culture was written for all time by S. Paul, and every subsequent revival of its ideal has issued in one degree or another of its dark result."*

There is no better illustration of the dangers involved in this path, than that which the history

* *Christian Character*.—Illingworth, p. 45.

of Samson supplies. He was obviously intended for such great things, and had such surprising gifts. The Bible emphasizes the greatness of his beginning: the advent of the angel first to the mother, then to the father; the strict injunction that the care of his character should begin even before his birth, in that quiet time which is so fruitful of good or ill. And he was to be a consecrated Nazarite—the first of that long line of men and women to be under vows—and to testify to it by his abstinence from all intoxicating drink and by the long, flowing tresses of hair. He grew up strong and bright, blessed of God and men, with a splendid physique and abounding good spirits. From the very first, his happy nature had been a joy to his parents, who called him Samson, or Sunshine.

There was, then, every expectation that one called of God, as he had been before his birth, and sanctified from the womb, endowed with just those gifts of faith, courage, and physical strength out of which heroes are made, would become an effective instrument for the work of God. And yet he failed, as many another has failed, partly because he persuaded himself that restraint in one direction allowed license in others; partly because he trusted to the outward sign of his consecration to carry him through. He had faith and audacity, great confidence in his gifts, and a supreme contempt for the enemy; and he supposed that

these might take the place of that restraint of the body which his strong nature specially needed. So he roamed free in fancy, imagination, and mind. He allowed the other passions to centre and gather force. His parents urged him to hold back when he became enamoured of a Philistine maid. But he over-persuaded them and himself, imagining that the blow he intended to deal his enemies would be the more effective, if dealt from within their camp rather than from without. So he began to revel in extraordinary exploits, and to use his splendid gifts for the satisfaction of his moods and fancies.

At times, and in certain places, amongst his fathers' tombs and amidst the recollections of his fathers' exploits, he was moved by the Spirit, and for a time would be filled with spiritual enthusiasm; and then again he would relapse into lazy, self-indulgent ways, a prey to every evil power. So he never produced any impression on the people at large. His own countrymen, in spite of their admiration of his courage and wit, felt he did the cause of Israel more harm than good. True, he was their champion, called of God, but he never seemed to care to associate with anyone, never organized a single expedition, never delivered his country.

At last, after many a fall, through the deceitful wiles of a woman, he breaks his consecration vow, and then the life falls to pieces;

as he told Delilah, "If I be shaven, then my strength will go from me, and I shall be like any other man." And so it turned out. "Like any other man": he, the called of God, the consecrated of the Most High, the man endowed with such splendid gifts! Could anything be well more sad and distressing? And yet he seemed to face its possibility without shame and horror. Yielding to a woman's blandishments, he consented to be smaller and poorer, to give up his high position and become just like any other man. All through his life he had been so unlike anyone else—so singular, eccentric, remarkable—but now Samson disappeared in the son of Manoah. When he began to realize the loss and mourn over it, he felt his strength returning. Day by day the old self reappeared in fuller measure, till at last he longed to repeat some of his old exploits. His enemies, however, took care to allow no opportunity for this. Blinded, he seemed helpless; and so he was so far as his country's good was concerned. He still, however, could vindicate the power of God. By one mighty act of faith he overthrew his enemies, and by a last sacrifice of himself did much to atone for that self-indulgence which had blighted his life. His life is a warning to all who, through a false view of liberty, refuse to curb the passions, to take resolutely in hand the control of the whole body.

Burns, Sheridan, Béranger, and many another, are sad illustrations of the same spirit.

Now and again we hear of a sudden judgment overtaking those whom nature has made very attractive by the gift of a sunny, bright disposition, and varied powers of the Spirit. They have used their popularity to press home the Gospel of God—men like Samson, of wit and humour, faith and spiritual insight, and at times capable of great religious enthusiasm. For a time their name and what they accomplish is in every one's mouth; and then there is an ugly rumour, a hurried flight, and the man is known no more. Religious people are perplexed. Was he not a consecrated man and under vows? Did he not at times sweep men off their feet by the exercise of his gifts? What, then, means this fall? It means that he never mastered himself, was never really under discipline. He controlled part of his nature, but not the whole; never really distinguished between liberty and license; whilst rejoicing in the wonderful truths of the Gospel which he taught with such power and abundance of illustration, yet in the meantime allowed the enemy to creep in and take the citadel.

It is interesting to turn from this farmer soldier, who was intended to be the saviour of his country, to one who, though called to a higher position than Samson, had no particular gifts. In the eyes of the world, Samson, with his bright, sunny nature, his wit and humour, his strong physique, was a much

more interesting and promising figure than the son of Zacharias. A jovial, healthy-natured man was he, of infinite faith and audacity; nothing seems to depress him, no situation appears too desperate; but the Baptist is a hermit, a recluse, now flashing out with thunderbolts of Divine vengeance and then retiring. And yet it is this silent son of the priest, better acquainted with the desert than the city, who becomes one of the world's great personalities. We look for gifts and, so far as we can see, we find none. He has but one prominent characteristic beside that of his preaching, and that is his self-mastery. He succeeded, then, just where Samson failed. It is true that of him, as of Samson, great things had been expected; and he, too, from his birth was set apart as a Nazarite, under strict vows of abstinence. About him, as of Samson, the strange circumstances of his birth excited the question, "What manner of child shall this be?"

But supernatural intimations and parents' wishes do not of themselves make destiny, though they may help to form the character of the man who is to rule it. It was the will of the Baptist, with Divine grace, that made him the strong personality he afterwards became. And if we seek the chief elements that went to make up his character, we learn from One whose judgment was always accurate, what they were—discipline and consistency. He was not a man, our Lord said, in never to be forgotten

words, "clothed in soft raiment," nor was he "a reed shaken with the wind"—*ie.*, he was stern towards himself, and perfectly stedfast in the face of public opinion.

The two things generally go together. The man who has a soft side of his nature which he indulges and flatters is generally a man of moods and fancies, wayward, though, it may be, capable of strong actions at times. On the other hand, the man who has his own body well in hand, and knows how to keep it so, is not easily swayed by this or that opinion. In a thousand small ways he has learnt to master his will, and he is not, therefore, easily turned aside from his purpose.

It was quite in accord with this to find that, unlike Samson, the Baptist was not open to woman's flattery. No doubt Herodias, before resorting to violence, tried the persuasive allurements of her beauty, that seductive manner which had won such a fatal power over Herod. But the stern ascetic was found to be absolutely uncompromising; neither courts nor women's smiles could make him swerve from the path of truth. "It is not right for thee to have her," was his constant answer to all arguments that the king might use. So he fulfilled the high position his father had marked out for him, and won from Christ the highest commendation it is possible for anyone to receive. "Verily, I say unto you," He said to the multitude that crowded round to hear what message He was

going to return to the prisoner, "among them that are born of women, there is none arisen greater than John the Baptist." Great, no doubt, in the unique position he filled of Forerunner to the Saviour of mankind; great, also, as a preacher of righteousness; but greatest, perhaps, in this, that he had taken such pains to prepare and discipline himself for the work.

The Baptist was, however, no ascetic for the sake of asceticism. For thirty years, or thereabouts, he had lived in the desert on desert food. The rock was his pillow, the earth was his bed, locusts and wild honey his simple nourishment. Not only was his body inured to hardship, but through constant discipline it became the willing servant of his spirit. Such rigorous severity and lengthened solitude might have made him gloomy, harsh, and forbidding, had it not been for his constant communion with God. So far from this being the case, he shews a shrewd insight into human nature. He knows the sins of the soldiers, the publicans, the Pharisees, and other classes of society that came out to hear him. And he has amongst his disciples the Apostle of Love, and the gentle Andrew, who was felt to be the one person in the Apostolic band who would sympathise most truly with Gentile thought.

It is also interesting to remember that, unlike the Christ, he bade no one to leave his home to follow him; he made no attempt to found a devout community; he was quite satisfied if

men did their own duty faithfully and well. He was no ascetic for the sake of asceticism. The end was never lost in the means. Feeling the high responsibility of his calling, realizing the mysterious signs that accompanied his birth, he felt it necessary for himself to have a stricter and severer training than was needful for others.

It may be said, truly enough, there have been many who have shewn the same superb indifference to the needs of the body—soldiers, scientific students, artists and poets—but, unlike the Baptist, they had some great earthly excitement that carried them along from day to day. The expected battle, the longed for discovery, the poem, the picture, killed for the time bodily longing; but how often this very restraint has issued in some wild indulgence when the strain was over. With the Baptist the battle with the flesh was continuous, and with every success the man became stronger, there being no off-days or seasons to break its influence. There have been, also, many religious—and these not all confined to the Church of Christ—who have shewn the same retirement, love of solitude, and carelessness as to the means of living; but how many of these made their asceticism an end in itself. The body was viewed and treated as an enemy to be silenced and condemned, or the austerities were reckoned as so many merits to be placed to the good of the soul's account when it went before the Judge. With the Baptist, this long, silent dis-

cipline of nearly thirty years was maintained simply as a means to an end. And so he passes away, a really strong personality, the greatest of all the great prophets that had gone before him.

As we look back on the contrast presented by the preceding sketch, we feel that it is, of course, true to say that there were other characteristics which went to make the Baptist what he became, and to spoil Samson's career; but they are not those that the Bible emphasizes. In both cases, it is the indulgence or control of the body that is marked. The Baptist stands for a bare simplicity in the use of the world, a stern self-discipline; Samson for the satisfaction of every mood or fancy.

It is, I think, noteworthy that, in an age of extremes, when men were either ascetic or self-indulgent, the New Testament should lay stress upon the mean between the two—self-control rather than austerity, freedom rather than license. It is the Apostle who "keeps under his body"—or, according to a more vigorous rendering, "bruised it severely"—who writes to a young friend urging him to take a little wine for his stomach's sake and his often infirmities. The great preacher of the Gentiles evidently felt that the greatness of his revelations and successes, his wide ministries with so many, both men and women, of different characters, needed the restraint of a strong self-control.

Spiritual ministrations, depending as they do

so much on sympathy and warm affections, are perhaps more open to the inrush of special temptations. It is the emotional side of life, felt so strongly by artists, musicians, poets, and preachers, that specially needs an unassailable basis of physical control. The man who exercises a watchful eye over his rest and food—who at all times, in holiday as well as in busy work, lives by rule—may without risk let his sympathies have wide range. But it is just this that is so difficult. As with Samson, such often feel moved by the Spirit, in certain places and under certain circumstances. The inspiration is strong upon them; they hate to be tied by duties or principles, and must, without hindrance of rule or discipline, let themselves go, in song, poetry, or sermon. They do so, but the strain is severe; reaction sets in, the body makes a strong demand; and the danger, unless the whole physical constitution is dominated by settled habits of control, is serious. With some, there is a mental and spiritual collapse; with others, drink, opium, or other drugs are resorted to. The real personality of the man sinks into oblivion, and, under the power of the poison, a false fleeting shadow of what he would be—calm, witty, audacious—takes its place. That fair image is not forgotten, and the temptation to experience its delusive charm again and again becomes almost overmastering. It is in cases like that, when a false person-

ality is being substituted for the true, when a man is in danger of living in dreams rather than realities, in shadowland instead of a world of hard facts, that destruction of a part to save the whole is the only remedy. Then the right eye must be plucked out, the right hand cut off. "The sudden operation of the knife is the only successful means of dealing with fleshly sins." It is a violent remedy, and apparently affects not only the body but the personality, which is rendered less complete. "It is obviously implied that completeness—the possession of two eyes and two hands—is the preferable condition, and that incompleteness is a lower alternative, but a necessity, in consequence of our tendency to sin."*

It may be that such a condition is implied in the words of the Apostle: "If any man's work shall be burned"—and the work implied is the building up of character—"he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved, yet so as through fire." But incompleteness is infinitely better than total loss. A thousand times better to be somewhat less than we were meant to be, than to be mere shadows of ourselves, ever seeking and yet never reaching the real truth of our destiny; better "that one of thy members should perish, and not thy whole body go into hell."

"I die daily" is not a phrase the world understands or has any sympathy with, but, strange though it may seem, it is the motto

* *Christian Character*.—Illingworth, p. 48.

of the richest and happiest lives. It describes a daily discipline whereby men, like the Baptist and S. Paul, kept open their lives to all the blessings of fellowship with God. It describes that on the human side which our Lord describes on the divine, when He says: "Every branch in Me that beareth not fruit, He purgeth it that it may bring forth more fruit." The strength of the plant being given to the formation of new wood, a number of useless correspondences have to be abruptly closed, while the useful connections are allowed to remain. It implies no disrespect to the body; it only means that we can only be at our best when our body is in its right relation to the spirit. The body, like the animal, to use James' words, has a hairtrigger constitution—*i.e.*, when it has an impulse it must yield to it. The daily death is the daily check the spirit places upon these impulses. Is, then, the body a hindrance? Rabbi Ben Ezra asks:

"To man propose this test:
The body at its best,
How far can that project thy soul
On its lone way?"

The answer is, "A long distance." It is, after all, only through the body that we get the impressions and powers that make the soul. The body, then, must be at its best. "A man must make his body the best instrument he can make for the spirit, the very best medium for the spirit to work through." But if he is to do

this, he must not fear self-mortification or self-crucifixion. And yet, at the same time, we remember the words of that great Apostle who practised a sterner discipline than he preached, "Bodily discipline only profiteth a little; whilst godliness is profitable for all things, having the promise of the life which now is, and of that which is to come."

CHAPTER XII.

PERSONALITY AND MONEY.

S. JOHN AND JUDAS.

PRAYER, silence, penitence, obedience, consecration, fellowship, patience—all these we look upon as essential to the development of ourselves. There is one power we have not yet touched which has a value beyond even these, and that is the power of Love.

“Love,” as Mr. Illingworth says, “is the fundamental characteristic of our personality—the first to appear in infancy, the last to survive in age; our strongest motive, our deepest need, the one desire whose satisfaction is the only condition of our ultimate rest. The most perfect type of personality which we know by experience is that in which the rational and moral development is dominated by the presence of love. Love is at once the basis and crown of personality.”* We all feel this, and, however dazzled we may be by the many and varied gifts of great men, that which touches us most deeply, that which reveals them to us most completely, is their love.

* *Christian Character*, p. 88.

When David heard of Jonathan's death, he not only felt that he would miss that dash, swifter than an eagle's, which enabled him with but one companion to scale the cliff and put to flight the Philistine garrison, but chiefly that love which was more wonderful than even the love of women. When the great Nelson passed away, the scene that lived in men's minds, and did so much to atone for the one stain on his fair fame, is that last one consecrated by his love to his comrade. In the words, "Kiss me, Hardy," we seem to see the power that made him so great. So, too, Wellington was strong in his iron strength and inflexible determination, but still stronger in the deep sympathy that was so rarely expressed. Dr. Hulme, who saw him in tears after Waterloo, and those who heard him speak of Sir R. Peel in tones broken by emotion, saw the veil lifted and the real man manifested in the care that he had for his soldiers and friends. It is love that attracts, whether on the stage in some exciting scene, or in the street as you pass two children with their arms round one another's necks, or in the field as you see the lark singing to its mate. It always touches, is always remembered.

And as love uplifts, so it is the want of love that depresses. As Archbishop Benson, in one of his letters, writes: "All the unhappy feeling about the reminiscences is only due to want of love. Oh, how little one knew the value of that. How little all those years one thought about grace and graces.

Strength and finish seem to have been one's compassless aims. . . . But I can try that the coming years, if they are given, shall have the work of love and grace in them."

It is not the fault of the Bible if we have not learned to appraise it rightly. S. Paul, in that matchless passage of his letter to the Corinthians, writes quite plainly that a man is nothing without it. One by one he passes in review those who move the world—the golden-tongued orators, the prophets and gifted seers who penetrate the secrets of the future, the men of faith who move mountains, the great philanthropists who give their all to feed the poor, the martyrs who go to the stake; and of each and all he says that, in spite of their gifts, without love they are nothing; they exist, but they have no real personality, no reality of being. Stripped of their particular powers as they would be by death, they are conscious of nothing but vanity and emptiness. The self has disappeared; the power to move in another life, where fellowship is everything, is not to be found: they are not impersonal, but without sense of personality.

Love, then, we must obtain. And, as Browning sings:

"Our life, with all it yields of joy and woe,
And hope and fear—believe the aged friend,—
Is just our chance o' the prize of learning love,
How love might be, hath been, indeed, and is."*

* *A Death in the Desert.*

Just our chance! But how are we to use it? Plato, in memorable words, bids us begin not with the universe, nature, or the world, but with one person:—"The true order of approaching to the things of love is to use the beauties of earth as steps along which to mount upward to that other beauty, rising from the love of one to the love of two, and from the love of two to the love of all fair forms, and from fair forms to fair deeds, and from fair deeds to fair thoughts; till from fair **thoughts** he reaches on to the thought of the **uncreated** loveliness, and at last knows what true beauty is."

"From the love of one to the love of two." But where shall we begin? Shall the husband begin with his wife, the child with her mother, the friend with friend? The goal may have been reached that way by some; and it is true that the Bible asks how can a man who loves not his brother, whom he hath seen, love God, Whom he hath not seen; but it is not the way of those who, like S. John or S. Paul, have known most of the meaning of love. That way had been tried for some thousands of years, but had not been uniformly successful. The "all fair forms" is strangely limited, both by social distinctions and physical hindrances. A society in which rich and poor, wise and ignorant, slave and freeman drank of the same cup and ate of the same bread was not even dreamt of by those who began with the dearest friend they knew on earth. One difficulty

always stood in the way; and that was, the more you loved the friend the more likely you were to share his dislikes, and these, added to your own, made catholic love impossible.

No; the secret was learnt by beginning with Christ. He awakened in those who knew Him a quiet, strong passion like to the love they had felt for their friend, only infinitely greater and deeper. He became everything to the men and women who knew Him. At first, they felt His affection to be so strong and personal that it seemed as though He cared for them alone, and then they found that all were the objects of the same strong feeling. It was then impossible that they should not be interested in them, learn to care for them, and at last love them. Bound to Him, they were bound to all men.

It was as though the citizens of a great city forgot their mutual jealousies in their common devotion to a great hero; or as though sons and daughters, gathered from places far distant, were bonded together by devotion to a wise and loving mother. It was known that Christ cared infinitely for the poorest and most ignorant. Those, then, who cared for Him naturally cared for them. First bound by love to Him, they afterwards were bound by love to one another. It was a simple solution to an apparently insoluble problem. From the world's point of view, there are so many who are dull and uninteresting that it seems waste of time to

cultivate their acquaintance. But as, when the King has shown marked favour and honour to a commonplace man; he becomes an object of interest to the nation, so, too, when we know the slow and unattractive to be cared for by Christ, he necessarily becomes cared for by all those in Christ.

A simple solution, and yet, as we know, not found by everyone. It is still true that many are missing the chance that life gives of learning to love. They learn many other things—skill in the field, business, artistic accomplishments—but they do not learn love. For a brief time beauty, or the affection of another, wakened it, but it was neglected and smouldered away. Their interests narrowed, their business began to pall, the home became flat and dull. What is it? Have they not heard of the Christ? Have they not known how infinitely great He is? Have they not been told of the Love that bears down upon each, wrapped in the sacred Body and the precious Blood? All that they know, and yet love is not felt. What is it? It is this, their heart is not disengaged. There is a prior attraction, a nearer interest. They are so near, and yet so far. It seems strange that His love does not consume the earthly interest. With some it does not.

There is a dark story about one who was drawn to Christ, drawn to leave his home and friends to share Christ's privations, to go on His missions, to preach His word and tell others of

Him. He knew Him very intimately, shared His table and private conversations ; saw His works of love, His miracles on the poor, the blind, lame, and halt ; watched every day that wonderful unvarying unselfishness, the constant thought of others, the unceasing consideration of their needs. All this he saw, and yet he was unmoved, indifferent, cold. The story goes on to tell how the Master, finding that His own love failed, in order to touch his heart, gave him the care of the poor. He had the charge of the bag, out of which relief was given. It was hoped that when he saw the poverty, distress and misery, his heart might be touched. But he still remained heartless. He was a disciple, but simply for his own purpose ; a Christian that he might get something out of Christ. He saw the love—love in the Master, love in His fellow disciples—and yet never believed in it. To him it was sentiment—something womanish, effeminate, weak, unbecoming in One who was building up a kingdom. The gift of Mary—the precious box of spikenard—the pouring it on the Master's feet, the wiping His feet with the hair, excited his indignation. An absurd, foolish waste of money, and the Master ought to have rebuked it ! That was Judas' estimate of love. It was a waste, an extravagance, something inexplicable ! And as he fails to understand Mary's love, so he cannot make out Christ's love. All His gracious kindness, warm devotion and patient consideration were nothing to him. He would sell them

all, as he did, for thirty pieces of silver. It was then that he committed spiritual suicide; and after that the end is never very far off. Isolated from all men, as every man is who plays the traitor, he began to hate the self which was his only companion. Then, in Bible language, Satan entered into him. The personality that Christ tried to develop now passes into other hands, the hands of one who hates instead of loves. There is a very short agony, and then Judas flings away his life—the life that was no longer his own—and goes, in intolerable solitude, to his own place.

We ask for an explanation, and can find none. Judas once loved. As a child he probably loved his mother, and as a boy his friend; but now the power to love was gone. He could bring disaster on his friends, and inflict an irreparable wrong on the Leader who had been everything to him for three years. He lost even consideration for himself, and threw all away in the same mad frenzy that he sold his Master. The Bible tells us that he loved money. But this only puts the mystery one step back. Why did he care for money? Because he wished to be someone, to shine, to be noticed, to have power. It was with this object that he had joined the band at first, and, fearing he was going to miss it, he struck out for himself. It is the old mistake, constantly repeated, of supposing that power lies in something without, rather than something within.

Contrast S. John ! A fisherman's son, without the shrewdness, the ability, possibly the prestige, that belonged to the man of the South ! Who could predict that his name would one day be known throughout the world and his writings absorb the attention of the greatest minds that civilization has known ? He has not the mark of a Socrates or a Demosthenes, nor does he seem to be like one of the old prophets — only a plain fisherman's son. Earnest ; and though religious, yet stormy and perhaps passionate ; a Son of Thunder, with much that was earthly and poor. And yet he it is who not only impresses his own countrymen, but who sits like a seer in Asia with crowds of disciples trying to catch every word ; who leaves a Gospel, three Letters, and an Apocalypse to be read in every language to the end of time.

What is his secret ? How is it he becomes so great, and wields such a mighty influence ? He has one gift, and that is love. And that love was concentrated on Christ. From the first he perceived His wonderful attractiveness, was drawn to His sublime character, elevated by His teaching. There is no fear in love, and S. John knew of none. He could ask his Master anything, could treat Him as a child would his mother. Though realizing more fully than anyone else the Divine Majesty of His Person, he felt, perhaps because of Its greatness, that he could repose upon It. Not once, but again and again when lying beside Him on the couch, he would

throw his head back on to his Master's bosom, look into His eyes, and rest more than content with the love he found there. And love sharpened his intuitions rather than his intellectual power. Like Samuel, he is the man who at once sees. He first guessed at the Resurrection from the state of the grave cloths. Directly he saw them he felt sure something had happened, and so "went not in" to the sepulchre. He first recognized the Risen Lord when He stood on the shore hailing the boat. Love works by intuition rather than reason, and S. John's love anticipated the discoveries of others. So he saw further than any other disciple, not excepting S. Paul. He could divine what things would happen, because he could divine what things were in his Master's mind. He had not S. Peter's dash and enthusiasm, nor S. Paul's argumentative skill ; but yet he becomes the great prophet of the Christian Church. As he discerned the meaning of the events of our Lord's earthly life, so he discerns the meaning and plan of His heavenly life. In that strange work which unveils the future, he just tells what he saw, what love revealed to him.

And yet he had no gift but love. It was love that made him the great personality he became ; love that made him the great interpreter ; and knowing it to be the great power for moulding life, he felt he had said everything when he had repeated the words, "Little children, love one another."

But we still seek an answer to the question, Why does S. John love and why does Judas fail? And no complete answer can be forthcoming. The reply lies in the inscrutable mystery of the human will. Both had the same opportunity, both were open to the same influences. But the one set out to be what God intended him to be, and let the warmth of family love, the strength of the Baptist's affection, and the indescribable power of the love of the Son of God enter in, expand, develop, and enrich the self. The other had a plan of his own. He would make his mark, satisfy his stirring ambitions; and so, being ever restless, ever craving to find some new opportunity, he only had occasional glimpses of love, never got really warmed by it, never felt its stimulating power; and at last the light went out, and darkness and his own place were all he knew. Judas sought to win his soul and lost it; S. John lost his soul for Christ's sake and found it. The one became less and less of man, the central activities that Love keeps going gradually slackening, and at last stopping altogether; the other grew day by day into the perfect man, through the expansive power of that inner fire of love that was fed continuously by the love of Christ.

CHAPTER XIII.

PERSONALITY AND CHRIST.

POWER OF HIS EXAMPLE.

IN the preceding chapters one omission must have appeared strange. Of the many illustrations of the various characteristics that go to make a full personality, none was taken from that Life which is more remarkable than any history can show for the fulness of its personality and the extraordinary range and power of its influence ; and yet the life of Christ bears a stronger testimony than any to the power of those graces we have been endeavouring to illustrate. This subject was purposely left to the end, in order that, with the fresh illustration supplied from our Lord's life, we might sum up all that has been said.

We remember, however, at the outset two things : first, that He was the Son of God, and that His personality was always Divine, and therefore could not receive any accession of strength or fulness through the events of His earthly life ; and, in the second place, that He was the Son of Man, and, therefore, advanced

as man does in the fulness of human experience. We remember such words as "*It became Him for whom are all things, and through whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Author of their Salvation perfect through sufferings*"; and "*And having been made perfect, He became unto all them that obey Him the Author of eternal Salvation.*" Such passages must mean that when He took the manhood into God, He took it not at first in its fulness, but in its smallest measure. He was first infant, then child, then man. Little by little, He entered into a wider and wider range of human experience, and so was made perfect in it, receiving at each stage of His life something new, something further that had to be brought into submission to His eternal will. Though we cannot say that His personality grew, yet we can say that the volume of its human experience increased, that He became more and more man as each stage of progress was reached. And never was there such a fulness of human experience, because it was never in any way diminished by sin.

We look, therefore, with the greatest interest to His life to see whether we can discover in it any of those features which we have felt have marked the really great human lives. If they mark His life, then we may be the more readily sure that we have not been mistaken in believing them to be essential to all those who would be "*perfect as their Father in heaven is perfect.*"

Let us take first that which we felt to be the chief characteristic of Jacob—His prayers. For some reason or other, it is often assumed that a life of activity is inconsistent with a life of prayer; that you cannot have fulness of energy and fulness of devotion; that the one marks the life of the worker, the other the life of the recluse. The devotion of Christ, then, will be the more significant if it be found to be a part of a very full and busy life. Of this there can be no question whatever. It is true that details of His life, compared with those of others, are meagre; but there is enough to show the very busy and laborious character of His life.

We may take the day that S. Mark gives us in his opening gospel as being typical. It begins with teaching in the synagogue; teaching broken in upon by the cry of the demoniac, and followed by a scene of thrilling excitement. Departing thence, our Lord went at once to the house of Simon, whither He had been summoned to heal S. Peter's mother-in-law. By this time, no doubt, the day had waned; but no sooner did the sun begin to set than the whole city came densely thronging round the doors of the humble home, bringing with them their demoniacs and their diseased. And so, far into the deepening dusk the work went on: not the work of a healer who dispenses his gifts without labour or care, but of One Who bore the infirmities and diseases of others, and never healed without experiencing loss and weariness.

This life, then, so hindered and pushed by the many coming and going, that oftentimes they had not leisure so much as to eat; this life, spent in **going** about doing good; this life, which **combined** the varied tasks of Teacher, Doctor, and Host—for His large family of twelve men was absolutely dependent upon Him, and looked to Him not only for food and lodging, but for directions as to their going out and coming in—this is the setting of the completest devotion ever offered to the Father of mankind.

And yet with Him prayer was not a necessity, as it is with us. He was always the strong and perfect Son of God. He never made a mistake, never failed, never did a piece of work badly, never felt the constant shame His best workers perpetually feel; and yet He prayed. We are apt to think the **stronger** and **more perfect** a man becomes the **less** he needs prayer, though the more he ought to praise; but it was not so with Christ, He always prayed. We must remember, then, that a large part of that which makes up our prayers had no place in His. Our sins, our failures, our disappointments and blunders necessarily occupy a considerable space with us; but He had no sins of His own to be forgiven.

Again, the worries and anxieties which have a large place in our prayers had no part in His. He told men that it was wrong to be anxious about the future; and we may be sure that much of what we plead He quietly left. And

yet, as Dean Vaughan says: "The prayers of Christ were real prayers. There was no acting and no feigning in the All True. He prayed for real things, really prayed and was really answered. It is by no means enough to say that He sought to refresh Himself after contact with earth by converse with heaven; that, weary with the contradiction of sinners, He sought the solace of a communion with the Love which was His before the world's. Prayer itself was no luxury, no self-indulgence, and no indolence. We know this from the one prolonged prayer preserved to us by S. John. It was petition, direct petition, almost all through."*

We know it, also, from the prayer in Gethsemane. The Gospels speak of it as an agony, a prolonged struggle, so severe that the blood forced its way out over the tear-stained face. "Strong crying and tears" give unmistakable evidence of the intensity of His prayer. Jacob's struggle at Peniel was severe, as we have seen, but it was only a shadow of the conflict Christ knew.

And though in one sense Christ was all prayer, never for an instant lost communion with His Father, yet He had definite times and places for prayer. He doubtless prayed in the synagogue, which it was His custom to attend on the Sabbath days, and also in the Temple when He attended the festival services. We know, too, that He prayed with His disciples

* *The Prayers of Jesus Christ*, p. 15.

in the upper room. But most of His prayers were in solitude. In His teaching He had urged His disciples to get away alone; to enter into the inner chamber and, having shut the door, to pray to the Father in secret. And what He recommended He practised. He was withdrawing Himself in the deserts—*i.e.*, it was His custom so to do—and praying. "*He went out and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed.*"

And as He chose definite places where He could be quiet, so definite times. Sometimes it was very early in the morning—"*He rose up a great while before day*"; at other times, He would spend the whole night in prayer.

And as with us, so with Him, there were special occasions of prayer. He prayed in joy and triumph; He prayed in sorrow and humiliation; He prayed at work and prayed in rest. There was no such time of glory as that of the Baptism, when the heaven was opened and the Father's voice heard, or that of the Transfiguration, when He gave His friends a glimpse of what He really was; no such time of joy as that when the disciples returned from their work in exultation that the evil spirits were subject to them. On both occasions, we are told, He prayed. Again, there was the sorrow of Simon's anticipated sin, and the humiliation of the Cross: both were marked by prayer.

Further, the most laborious and toilsome days

were filled with prayer. No miracle was wrought without it. "He looked up to heaven when He would furnish forth the miraculous meal; He looked up to heaven beside the grave which He was to unlock;" and He explained the healing of the paralytic by saying: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He seeth the Father doing: for what things soever He doeth, these the Son also doeth in like manner."

So, too, the quiet times of thought and rest. When He is thinking whom He shall choose as the foundation stones of His kingdom, He prays; when He is about to test His disciples' faith in Him by the question, "Whom say ye that I am?" He prays.

And the subjects of His prayers are just those which make up our intercessions. Now it is for the Church, as on the eve of Good Friday, and now for an erring member of it, like Simon; now it is for all those who shall believe on His Name, and now for that wider circle, even those who were putting Him to death—Pilate and Herod, the Pharisees, and the rough soldiers.

And, lastly, one at least of our Lord's prayers had a place in that large class which we call unanswered prayers. Once, at least, we know He asked for a blessing and yet realized that it might not be the Father's will that it should be granted. He knew by experience what it was to bend His own human will in submission to the Divine will of the Father, to desire a thing and not to obtain it.

This brief review is surely sufficient to show us what a prominent place prayer had in the strongest and busiest life the world has seen. If our Lord's human personality—*i.e.*, the realm of His human personal experience—is the fullest, history records, then we know by this example, if by no other, that only as we pray can we become perfect as the Father is perfect.

We now turn to that characteristic which marked the life of Moses—silence; and we ask whether we can find this as a feature of the Perfect Life. And here, again, we place silence and solitude in contrast with fulness of speech and fellowship.

There is no particular virtue in the silence of a man who has nothing to say, or in the solitude of one who hates company. Our Lord's silence and solitude are so remarkable because they are in contrast with unique powers of speech and unique powers of perfect fellowship. "He spake as never man spake." "The common people heard Him gladly." Even His enemies were astonished and marvelled, saying, "How knoweth this man letters, never having learned." And this wonderful power, in bringing home great truths to the simplest minds, our Lord must have enjoyed using. He tells us Himself in one place that it was His meat, His sustaining power. He was, we may believe, always refreshed when He was preaching or teaching, though, as we know

from the parable of the Sower, no one knew better than He its limitations.

And as He delighted in preaching the Gospel, so He enjoyed the fellowship with man. In Him the old words were fulfilled: "*I was by Him as a master workman: and I was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him; rejoicing in His habitable earth; and my delight was with the sons of men.*"* In this, He was a complete contrast to the Baptist. The one was in the solitude of the deserts for thirty years; the other, a member of a crowded home in Nazareth. The one lived in seclusion, neither eating nor drinking with the sons of men; the other lived in the eye of the public, always accompanied by a band of men.

Our Lord's withdrawals are, then, as remarkable, as noticeable, as the sudden retirement of some great preacher would be, whom all were waiting to hear; some favourite leader, whose presence made the dullest society bright. And yet they were as marked a feature in His life as they were in that of Moses. The long absence in the wilderness at the outset of the ministry, the frequent retirements into solitary places for prayer, the last retreat into Peræa before the life closed, are all significant in a short, crowded ministry of three years. We must remember that He, like Moses, was building up and legislating for a great kingdom that was to last till eternity, that the Apostles needed

* Prov. viii. 31.

every moment of His time and teaching, that the world could not spare a single parable or miracle, that a day out of His public life must have seemed an irreparable loss; and yet He was constantly away, either alone or with His disciples, as when He took them for rest to the eastern side of the lake, or up the steep slopes of Hermon. And it was not with Him as it is with us, who, when we live much in the world, lose so quickly our touch with God. He was always in communion with the Father, and did not need quiet or solitude to restore it. The contrast between Him and mankind in this regard is, as has been pointed out,* expressed in a single verse. After the breaking up of some festival gathering, we are told that "Every man went to his own home, but Jesus went unto the Mount of Olives": not that He was without friends in the city who would gladly give Him lodging, but that He desired to gain that quiet which a night on the hills would give Him.

We are not, however, to believe that these retirements were always easy for Him. He loved fellowship—enjoyed being with those simple men whom God had given Him, as a father with his sons. The long retreat in the wilderness soon after He had left the loved society of His mother, and immediately after the commencement of His fellowship with the Baptist—that faithful servant whom He admired

* *In the Secret of His Presence.*—Knight, p. 33.

and praised—was not self-chosen. According to S. Mark the Holy Spirit drove Him; according to the other two evangelists, led Him, into the wilderness. We may well believe He shrank from its loneliness and the temptation it was sure to bring. Yet He submitted to all such times and opportunities because "He had taken upon Himself the position (in all points) of a Man—living and learning, growing and maturing, teaching and ministering—within the limits of a human nature possessed and indwelt by the Holy Ghost," and knew the value to that human nature of times of solitude and quiet.

And His silence was as remarkable as His solitude. How much He might have told us of the great **future**, of the progress of the world, of the **unseen** universe with which He was so familiar. **How** great, then, the restraint that kept His lips sealed! There is the same remarkable silence respecting Himself. He did, indeed, declare Himself plainly to be the Way, the Truth, and the **Life**; but how much lay behind all this of which **He** never spake. How easily, had He wished, could He have forced men to recognize His Deity, to believe in His absolute claims; but all this He held in reserve, only speaking just what was necessary. Again, how much is wrapped up in the words, "*I have yet many things to say unto you, but you cannot bear them now*"—much, doubtless, to be said of the difficulties and trials that lay before the Church—but He was silent, lest by His

words He might give them pain or discouragement. What a quiet patience in holding back so much of the future that would have been bewildering and difficult, because of their present inability to take it in !

And as we think of this silence, before enemies and friends alike, sometimes unbroken for long periods—or, as on the Cross, only broken by a very few short words—we must remember it is the silence of the Word of God, the silence of One Who never spake without adding clearness and dignity to His subject, Whose sayings were eagerly waited for. Surely it teaches reticence in a talkative age, and reveals one source of strength to those who would become themselves !

Let us pass on from this to the characteristics of Samuel and David, to that virtue of dependence which shews itself in consecration and obedience. This grace, also, depends very much for its beauty on the setting in which it is found. That a fawning, weak-spirited, cowardly man should show dependence were nothing surprising ; but if a man of undoubted courage and great force of character expresses it, we are at once impressed. And it is this that we see in our Lord. He is at once the most independent and dependent. When He is starving, after a long fast, He refuses the help which He could have supplied. In His ministry amongst men, He never seeks their help or hospitality. “ *The fowls of the air have*

nests, and the foxes holes, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head." He owns no one as teacher or master. It was well known that He sought no one's patronage or assistance. "*We know that Thou carest not for any one, for Thou regardest not the person of men,*" said His enemies. It was the standing marvel that One who had had no help of any kind, who had come out of a village like Nazareth where there were no means of help, should be what He was. "*Is not this the carpenter's son?*" "*Whence hath this man letters, never having learned?*" were remarks constantly made. He was never dependent on others for His work or teaching; never leaned on the judgment of others; never but once, so far as we know, sought the sympathy of others; endured hardness and the Cross alone.

And yet, though so markedly independent of man, He was so dependent on God that He never took a step without counsel, never wrought a cure without asking, never passed judgment without hearing. What struck the Roman centurion was not that He was endowed with vast powers, but that, like himself, He was "under authority," and therefore able to command. This spirit of dependence and absolute obedience was woven into His whole life. The helplessness of His infancy in the manger, the first token of it, is united to the helplessness of His agony upon the Cross, the last expression of a series of acts of humiliation, which all preach the same lesson.

There was the same love of consecration as of dependence. The way marked out for Him must have seemed amazing to the blessed Virgin, who knew the secret of His birth. That the Messiah should have His training in a carpenter's shop, situated in a village like that of Nazareth, was one of the enigmatical problems of the Divine plan. But to Christ all was easy and simple, for all was part of the Divine plan to which He was absolutely obedient. He sanctified Himself—*i.e.*, consecrated Himself—to every detail of the will of His Father. It meant narrowness, as consecration always does. From the point of view of the world, His was a narrow home and a narrow training. For a moment, it seemed as though Jerusalem would claim Him; but His Father's business lay in the northern village, and back to it He went. The men whom He chose for His disciples, all but one from despised and provincial Galilee; the discipline of fasts and solitudes that He readily accepted and used; the ordered life that never varied a hair's breadth from the plan laid down for Him; all these things showed plainly that He knew what consecration is. And as He learnt consecration in the daily exercise of the Father's will, so obedience through the things which He suffered. It was not merely that He was tried as David was, and refused, as David, to put aside the Cross when tempted to, but that, when heaven was opened to Him and He had but to walk into

it, He refused. The Transfiguration shewed what was possible at any moment, but "*He became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross.*"

Prayer, silence, and dependence; suffering, also, and love. There is no occasion to say anything about our Lord's love of discipline or His submission to suffering. His whole life, with its fastings and watchings, its trials and persecutions, its agony and death, is an expression of ready obedience to both. Whether we look at His bodily sufferings—the hunger, thirst, and weariness repeatedly experienced; or the mental sufferings He experienced through His deep sympathy with those whom He healed and helped, and with the nation He so ardently loved, sufferings which more than once broke up the fountain of tears; or those more bitter sufferings due to the estrangement and bitter hostility of the men He sought to win, which resulted in the agony of Gethsemane, it seems as though no one before or since ever entered so far into the waters of sorrow, ever realized so varied an experience of trial and grief. From one point of view this was inevitably so. Our pain is in proportion to our love. The more we love, the more sensitive we are to the hatred and hostility of others. And He who loved with a love that endured the Agony and the Cross must have known a pain beyond even our conception. He was indeed the Man of Sorrows and acquainted with grief, and this because He was Love, perfect Love.

It is difficult to speak or write of this ; first, because it is so obvious ; and secondly, because it reaches far beyond human thought or expression. It may be well, however, to remind ourselves of such a plain fact as, He is Love, rather than loving—*i.e.*, love is not an element of character with Him, as it is with us, to be harmonized with other elements, but the basis of all His character. He is, if we may venture to put it baldly, naturally loving ; and passing from ordinary human love into the atmosphere of His love was like passing out of a cold, formal society into a perfect home. Everyone who was natural and simple felt it at once. One by one they would come—Zacchæus with an apology, the Magdalene with tears and sobs, the rich young man with enthusiastic devotion—feeling in His presence, as a child feels in the presence of a much-loved mother, that they must out with everything, for there was nothing to be afraid of, perfect love casting out all fear. On the other hand, the formal, hypocritical, crooked were unaffected by it, never understood it, never appreciated it ; nay, strangely, wished it out of the way.

In the next place, we may remember that our Lord's love, being perfect and always full, never lacked any characteristic of love. There was emotion—emotion that knew no shame in its expression, emotion in the kiss, the tears, the strong words, "O Jerusalem ! O Jerusalem !" —but there was much else. There was the

courtesy that **never behaved** itself unseemly ; the patience that **suffered**, and suffered, and yet remained kind ; the humility that never vaunted itself, was never puffed up ; the gentleness that refused to be provoked ; the unselfishness that never pleased itself ; the guileless sincerity that rejoiced in the truth ; the warm generosity that never knew the touch of envy. And however much His love was tried, it never failed ; however despairing all around it were, it always hoped. And the best proof that we, who live nearly two thousand years after it was manifested and experienced, have of its fulness is found in the lives of the men who lived in its sunshine.

S. John, S. Paul, and S. Peter are all striking illustrations of its remarkable power. We read their letters, we study what we are told of their lives, and we ask what other explanation is there of their warm, wide love, reaching out to all men, except this, that they had known and lived with Love. Such love as they shewed proved that a new discovery had been made. "Jesus Christ had by His teaching and life thrown a totally new light upon the personality of man. He took love as His point of departure, the central principle in our nature, which gathers all its other faculties and functions into one; our absolutely fundamental and universal characteristic. He taught us that virtues and graces are only thorough when they flow from love; and further, that love alone can reconcile the

opposite phases of our life—action and passion, doing and suffering, energy and pain—since love inevitably leads to sacrifice, and sacrifice to perfect love. It may be granted that previous teachers had said somewhat kindred things. But Jesus Christ carried His precepts home by sacrifice, as none had ever done before. He lived and died the life and death of love, and men saw as they had never seen what human nature meant. Here at last was its true ideal, and its true ideal realized.”*

Such are some of the characteristics of One whom we delight to acknowledge as Perfect Man as well as Perfect God. The world has well-nigh exhausted the resources of its language in its endeavour to set Him up on high. Now it is Thomas Carlyle with “Jesus of Nazareth our divinest symbol. Higher has the human thought never yet reached!” Now it is Goethe: “There issues forth from the Gospels the reflected splendour of a sublimity, proceeding from the person of Jesus Christ, of so Divine a kind as only the Divine could ever have manifested upon earth.” Now it is Rousseau: “If the life and death of Socrates are those of a sage, the life and death of Jesus are those of a God.” Now it is John Stuart Mill, who writes of Him as “the ideal Representative and Guide of humanity.” And ever and always it is the great Church of God proclaiming day by day all over the

* Illingworth: *Personality, Human and Divine*, p. 201.

world that He only is holy, He only is the Lord, He only with the Holy Ghost, Most High in the Glory of God the Father. It is plain that the testimony of the best and wisest, even of those who cannot make their confession full and complete, is that He, and He alone, shows us what men ought to be. If we believe this witness, and believe also that only along His path shall we find fulness of personality and perfection of being, we shall follow "in His steps," in plain practical ways, seeking to add to our fellowship with Him in prayers, silence, consecration, obedience, suffering, discipline and love the grace of an ever-deepening penitence, and so each, in our separate measure, become perfect as our Father in heaven is perfect.

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